

Consecrations to the Holy Angels

A Theological and Historical Study

Part II

Historical Consecrations to the Holy Angels

Resumo

Tendo abordado, na primeira parte deste artigo, a natureza e a justificação teológica de uma consagração aos Santos Anjos, voltamos agora para a história. A seguinte sobrevisão sumária - em grande parte restringida à Igreja latina - quer evidenciar que tais consagrações são de fato agradáveis a Deus e uma parte autêntica da vida da Igreja, como se pode verificar pela diversidade, frequência, difusão e duração de consagrações aos Santos Anjos, juntamente com a sua múltipla recomendação eclesial.

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I. Biblical Aspect and the Beginning of the Church

God Himself placed the People of God under the protection of the Holy Angels, particularly under the care of St. Michael (cf. Ex 23,20; Dan 10,13.21; 1,1 especially in the LXX; Jud 9). St. John's depiction in the Apocalypse (12,7f) possibly also contributed to the fact that the protective office of St. Michael was extended to the Church as a whole.¹

Devotion to St. Michael in the Church goes back to the 1st Century.² In Phrygia are often to be found "formule invocanti la protezione di

¹ "Nell'Apocalisse Michele è l'angelo protettore della Chiesa, 'l'Israele di Dio' (Gal 6,16)" (G. SPADAFORA, *Michele*, in: *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* IX, 1967, col. 410; cf. J. MICHL, *Michael*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* VII (1962) col. 393).

² Cf. *Pastor Hermae*, Sim. VIII, 10. The Second Vatican Council mentions the veneration of the angels in conjunction with the beginning of the cult of the saints: "Apostolos autem et martyres Christi, qui sui sanguinis effusione supremum fidei et caritatis testimonium dederant, in Christo nobis arctius coniunctos esse, Ecclesia semper credidit, eos simul cum Beata Virgine Maria et sanctis angelis peculiari affectu venerata est" (*Lumen gentium* 50).

Michele”.³ In the 2nd Century, St. Justin gives witness to a Christian devotion to the Holy Angels (“bonorum Angelorum exercitus”) in order to protect the Church against the accusations of godlessness.⁴

II. The Consecration of Churches

Numerous *churches* were consecrated in honor of St. Michael, at least, from the 4th Century onwards:

Tutto l’oriente era popolato di chiese dedicate al santo Arcangelo; nella sola città di Costantinopoli se ne contavano una quindicina. In Egitto, a quanto ci attesta Didimo, erano numerosi in città come nelle campagne gli Oratori intitolati a S. Michele. ... La Chiesa d’Alessandria aveva messo sotto la sua protezione il Nilo, e ne faceva la commemorazione con molta solennità ... In occidente, e nell’Italia in particolare, il culto di S. Michele, a principio del V secolo, era pure abbastanza diffuso.⁵

In England, for example, more than 700 churches were dedicated either to the Holy Angels or to St. Michael. After the Blessed Mother and the Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul, the Angels were most common church patrons.⁶

Ancient missals, the Leonine, the Gregorian and the Gelasian missals, all have a feast for a consecration of a church in honor of St. Michael.⁷

³ *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* IX, 416; cf. M. RIGHETTI, *Storia Liturgica*, Milano 1969, II, pp. 434f.

⁴ *Apologia* I, 6, cf. *Apologia* II, 5.

⁵ RIGHETTI II, pp. 437-438. Already in the 5th Century there was a St. Michael’s Monastery in Constantinople (cf. *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* IX, 417).

⁶ “Accepting the figures of F. A. Foster in her *Studies in Church Dedications*, and without drawing a line between pre-Reformation and post-Reformation English churches (not now Catholic), we get the following enumeration of titulars: Christ 373, Holy Cross or Holy Rood 83, Michael, or Michael the Archangel, or St. Michael and the Angels 721 (one in six of the churches, ancient and modern, now attached to the established Church bears the name of Our Lady or one of her titles, the total being 2162, and the proportion in pre-Reformation times was still larger), John Baptist, 576; Peter, 936; Peter and Paul, 277; Paul, 329” (H. PARKINSON, *Patrons*, in: *Catholic Encyclopedia* 11, 1911, col. 563).

⁷ RIGHETTI II, p. 438. The *Leonianum* contained no fewer than five different masses for the 30th of September commemorating this church dedication (cf. L. EISENHOFER, *Handbuch der Katholischen Liturgik* I, Freiburg 1932, p. 602). “Nel *Sacramentario Leoniano* si ricordano i *loca* consacrati a Dio in onore di Michele: ciò fa pensare che già allora la basilica della Salaria non fosse il solo santuario dedicato all’Arcangelo” (*Bibliotheca Sanctorum*

As the devotion to the saints in general is directed ultimately to God, so too is the consecration of a church in honor of the angels or saints.⁸ the People of God, who pray there stand, in virtue of this consecration, under the protection and mediation of the particular angel or saint. This is why the consecrations of churches in honor of St. Michael the Archangel can be considered the first consecrations to Angels in the history of the Church that were undertaken by the hierarchy of the Church.

III. Angelic Patrons

The liturgy designates St. Michael as the Patron of the Dying as well as the Protector of Christians: “Te custodem et *patronum* sancta veneratur Ecclesia; *tibi tradidit Dominus* animas redemptorum in superna felicitate locandas.”⁹ Every form of patronage constitutes, in a certain sense, a special kind of consecration of the People of God inasmuch as they are entrusted to the Archangel in the assurance that he will effectively assist them. It should also be noted that devotion to St. Michael, as the Prince of the Heavenly Hosts, implicitly includes the veneration of the other angels as well.¹⁰

1. Among national patrons, St. Michael stands in first place. Devotion to Him as the Patron of *France* goes back to the time of King Clovis (466?-

IX, 422). Including the East and the West there were some 20 feast days in the course of the liturgical year in honor of St. Michael. The Latin Church alone had at least 8 different propers to the mass in his honor. (cf. A. A. BIALAS, *The Patronage of Saint Michael the Archangel* [Diss.] Chicago 1954, pp. 20-22).

⁸“Se talvolta, per onorare la SS. Vergine o dei Santi, il loro nome viene ricordato nella memoria della Dedicazione, esse va inteso in sott’ordine del culto di Dio, al quale quello della SS. Vergine o dei Santi è formalmente coordinato” (RIGHETTI IV, 1959, p. 504).

⁹*Rituale Romanum*, Romae 1925, Tit. XI, Cap. 3 (Prayer before the Leonine Exorcism); cf. RIGHETTI II, p. 440.

¹⁰“Non va infine dimenticato che la festa liturgica del 29 settembre mira ad onorare S. Michele, non solo singolarmente, ma in speciale modo *come capo e rappresentante di tutte le schiere angeliche*. I testi più antichi della Messa e, in misura più ridotta, quelli dell’Ufficio esprimono questo *carattere collettivo che si indirizza globalmente agli Angeli*, a cominciare dall’orazione *Deus, qui miro ordine*, composta molto probabilmente da S. Gregorio Magno” (RIGHETTI II, pp. 440-441). In the 9th Century Rhabanus Maurus (H 856) composed the hymns *Te splendor* and *Christe sanctorum* in honor of the three Archangels.

511).¹¹ The French King Charles VII, upon his ascent to the throne, made possible through the singular intervention of St. Joan of Arc, placed the Kingdom under the protection of the Archangel Michael.¹² In the year 1912, the French bishops renewed this Consecration to St. Michael. In fact, each ordinary placed his own diocese and the whole land under His protection. On that occasion the Bishop of Saint-Claude wrote:

Après Dieu et la Vierge Marie, nul n'a plus de droit à notre dévotion que saint Michel, le prince de la milice céleste, le défenseur de l'Église et le protecteur de la France. ... Notre pays a été spécialement confié à sa garde. Le 16 octobre 708 il prenait possession du mont Tombe en Normandie, d'où il n'a jamais cessé de protéger la France. Nos rois ont reconnu sa souveraineté et l'ont proclamé "prince des Gaules". Des sanctuaires et des cités lui ont été consacrés; des corporations, des confréries, des ordres de chevalerie ont été fondés sous son vocable.¹³

In the 12th Century, the first Portuguese King, Alfonso Henrique, is said to have moved St. Theotonius († 1162) to consecrate the new kingdom of Portugal to the Holy Archangel Michael. Prior to this, he had already placed his person and his army under the protection of the Archangel.¹⁴ St. Michael is also honored as the Patron of *Germany*,¹⁵ of *Japan*¹⁶ and – at least in former centuries – of *Poland*.¹⁷

¹¹ Cf. *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* IX, 429.

¹² Cf. Marquis DE LA FRANQUERIE, *Mémoire pour obtenir le renouvellement de la Consécration de la France à Saint Michel*, Fontenay-le-Comte 1947. Bishop Thomas Paul Henri Lemmonier from Bayeux and Lisieux writes: "N'existe-t-il aucun acte officiel qui donne à saint Michel le titre de patron de la France? Charlemagne, reconnaissant des grâces, des victoires obtenues par l'intercession de saint Michel, avait fait broder sur ses étendards l'image du saint archange et l'avait appelé: *Patronus et princeps Galliarum*, patron et prince de l'empire des Gaules" (cited from: V. KLÉE, *La Consécration Nationale*, p. 51).

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 276-277.

¹⁴ This is said to have happened in the year 1140. Later, at the siege and conquest of Santarém (ca. 1147), it is claimed that St. Michael appeared and helped visibly, such that the King in the course of his life, out of grateful memory, had over 100 churches and chapels dedicated to St. Michael. (cf. C. EVARISTO, *The Many Apparitions and Interventions of St. Michael*, Fátima 1996, pp. 54-56).

¹⁵ Cf. F. G. HOLWECK, *Patron*, in: *Catholic Encyclopedia* 10, 1911, 276.

¹⁶ BIALAS, *The Patronage of Saint Michael the Archangel*, p. 25 (making reference to the *Ordo Catechistarum S. Viatoris* from September 29, 1952)

The *Philippines* were placed under the protection of all the Holy Archangels.¹⁸ In *Brazil* the Bishop of Aterrado (the present day Luz) entrusted his diocese to the protection of St. Raphael in 1930.¹⁹

Since the beginning of the 16th Century, Portugal celebrates a proper feast in honor of the *Guardian Angel of Portugal*, a privilege granted by Pope Leo X at the request of King Manuel I. The feast was celebrated as a solemnity on the first Sunday in July. Pope Pius XII confirmed the Feast as a memorial with a decree dated June 28, 1952, after it had been practically suppressed by the government that was inimical to the Church.²⁰ Currently, the feast is celebrated in Portugal as an obligatory memorial on the 10th of June.²¹

2. Additionally, the three holy Archangels also enjoy certain ecclesial patronages. In modern times Pope Pius XII proclaimed St. Michael the patron of radiologists and radiation therapy²² as well as the patron for the public security and police in Italy.²³ In an audience on May 8, 1940 he recommended St. Michael as a patron against sicknesses:

Voi dunque, o dilette figli e figlie, che intravedete già colle gioie anche i doveri e le sollecitudini della famiglia, domandate a S. Michele che allontani dai

¹⁷ G. MARANGONI, *Grandezze dell'Arcangelo S. Michele*, Rom (original edition 1739; reprint 1992), p. 170. See also above in footnote nr. 5, where the Nile River was placed under the protection of St. Michael.

¹⁸ See: J. S. RAMIREZ, *Novena to St. Michael and the Archangels*, Manila 1985. The brochure is published by the Nation Shrine to St. Michael and the holy Archangels (also the pro-cathedral of Manila) with an Imprimatur from Cardinal Jaime Sin. In the "Prayer for the Philippines" one reads: "O Glorious Archangels, whom *God has entrusted the care of our beloved country*, we honor you and thank you for the care and protection you have given to this great nation from the first moment of its inception" (pp. 15-16).

¹⁹ See the prayer of consecration in Appendix II, nr. 20. Bishop Manuel Nunes Coelho attributed the quick end to the bloody civil war in Brazil to St. Raphael the Archangel, to whom prayers were addressed throughout Brazil and upon whose feast day (October 24, 1930) the violence suddenly ceased (cf. J. B. LEHMANN, *Na Luz Perpétua*, Juiz de Fora 1953, pp. 437 ff).

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 84-86.

²¹ See *Missal Romano*, approved on June 28, 1991, pp. 863-864.

²² AAS 33 (1941) 128.

²³ AAS 42 (1950) 286. St. Michael is honored also in the USA and in Ireland as the patron of the police.

vostri focolari le ansietà che la salute precaria dei fanciulli, o la minaccia di epidemie, o le crisi stesse dello sviluppo cagionano al cuore dei genitori.²⁴

Archangel Gabriel, the angel of the joyful Annunciation, is honored by messengers, postal workers and newspaper deliverymen as their protector-patron.²⁵ In 1951 Pope Pius XII declared him the patron of radio and telecommunications.²⁶ In the same year he was assigned a further area of patronage: “St. Gabriel Archangelus coelestis apud Deum Patronus omnium Hispaniae Legatorum constituitur.”²⁷

Drawing surely from Tobit 5,17, St. Raphael the Archangel is called the Patron of pilgrims and travelers in the Church’s prayers for travelers.²⁸

The special form of angelic patronage over ecclesiastical associations and religious communities will be addressed specifically in a subsequent section.

IV. Consecrations to the Holy Angels

In the period following the Council of Trent, the great epoch of Consecrations to Christ and to the Blessed Virgin blossomed in the Church. The Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was the first to gain prominence. Somewhat later, consecrations to Mary came to enjoy widespread popularity. The same is also true for the devotion to the Holy Angels whereby, we may note, that it is not a matter of successive historical frameworks but rather of temporal overlapping. “Les directeurs des congrégations de la sainte Vierge inculquaient également cette dévotion aux anges et à l’ange gardien, à ceux qu’ils devaient former à la piété.”²⁹

²⁴ *Atti e Discorsi di Pio XII*, II (1940-1941), 111. Pope Pius XII made express reference to Castello Sant’Angelo and the relief from the Plague at the time of Pope Gregory the Great.

²⁵ *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* IV (1963) col. 480.

²⁶ *Pro memoria* from January 12, 1951, in: AAS 44 (1952) 216-217.

²⁷ *Pro memoria* from June 5, 1951, in: AAS 44 (1952) 202-203.

²⁸ “In viam pacis et prosperitatis dirigat vos omnipotens et misericors Dominus, et Angelus Raphael comitetur vobiscum in via, ut cum pace, salute et gaudio revertamini ad propria” (*Benedictio peregrinorum ad loca sancta prodeuntium*, in: *Rituale Romanum*, Romae 1925, Tit. VIII, Cap. 11); cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* VIII (1963) col. 992 and 1153f.

The rapid spread of this devotion to the angels is due especially to the Jesuits and to the Oratory of Cardinal Bérulle (1575-1629):

On comprend aisément pourquoi la Compagnie de Jésus s'est employée si énergiquement à propager cette dévotion aux anges. Les maîtres, les prédicateurs et les directeurs y voyaient avec raison un moyen excellent de formation et de perfection pour les âmes. En signalant l'influence des Jésuites dans la diffusion de la dévotion aux anges et aux anges gardiens nous n'oublions pas celle qu'ont exercée dans le même sens le Cardinal Bérulle ni monsieur Olier, particulièrement dévot aux anges".³⁰

St. John Eudes (1601-1680), religious founder and the "father, doctor and apostle" of the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary and one of the most important representatives of the French School, provided not only the theological foundation for the consecrations to Jesus and Mary but also composed a number of consecrations to the Holy Angels.³¹ From

²⁹ J. DUHR, *Ange*, in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I (1937), 606 (the article covers the columns 580-625). Jeremias Drexel wrote his *Orologium Auxiliaris Tutelariorum Angelorum* (Venedig 1629) for the members of the Sodality of Mary in Germany.

³⁰ *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 606.

³¹ His basic theological position is expressed in the following terms: "La troisième disposition est de nous donner au Père, au Fils, au Saint-Esprit, à la très sainte Vierge, à tous les Anges, à tous les Saints, spécialement à nos bons Anges et à nos saints Protecteurs, et de les supplier de nous préparer à cette solennité, de la célébrer avec nous, de nous associer avec eux, et de nous rendre participants de l'amour qu'ils portent au très aimable Cœur de notre très adorable Jésus" (*Le Cœur admirable*, in: *Œuvres complètes du Vénérable Jean Eudes*, Paris 1905 ff, vol. 8, p. 310). His spirit is completely permeated by the mystery of the Communion of Saints and the efficacy of a spirit of consecration, which conviction he seeks to sustain in the hearts of the faithful. He writes: "Or l'oraison, c'est une élévation respectueuse et amoureuse de notre esprit et de notre cœur vers Dieu. ... C'est une participation de la vie des Anges et des saints, de la vie de Jésus-Christ et de sa très sainte Mère, et de la vie de Dieu même et des trois personnes divines. Car la vie des Anges, des Saints, de Jésus-Christ et de sa très sainte Mère n'est autre chose qu'un continuel exercice d'oraison et de contemplation, étant sans cesse occupés à contempler, glorifier et aimer Dieu" (*Le Royaume* in: *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 1, p. 192). See several of his consecration in Appendix II, nr. 6.

Furthermore, he recommends renewing one's consecration to the Holy Angels: "Après avoir rendu les devoirs précédents à Notre-Seigneur et à sa très sainte Mère, il faut saluer et honorer le saint Ange gardien qui nous a été donné de Dieu en notre naissance; les Anges gardiens de nos père et mère, de la maison, du lieu et de l'évêché auquel nous sommes nés; l'ordre des Anges avec lesquels Dieu a dessein de nous associer dans le ciel; comme aussi les Saints du jour, du lieu, et du pays auquel nous avons pris naissance. Il faut les remercier des faveurs que nous avons reçues d'eux; nous offrir et donner à eux pour les honorer en

the context of these prayers, it is clear that the consecration to the Guardian Angel and to the Holy Angels should strengthen our bond with Jesus. The life and service of priests is especially strengthened through the help of the Angels. Priests should link their consecration to the Guardian Angel and to the Holy Angels with their morning prayers, renewing them daily before offering the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.³² Similarly, when they preach they should renew their consecratory sentiments toward the Holy Angels. When they administer the sacraments, they should entrust the recipients to the care of the Holy Angels.³³ Herein one can verify three different forms of consecration: the entrustment of those under one's pastoral care to the Holy Angels, the personal consecration to the Guardian Angel, and the consecration to all the Holy Angels.

Consecrations to the Guardian Angel and/or to the Holy Angels are attributed to important antecessors and contemporaries of St. John Eudes. Among these number: St. Charles Borromeu (1538-1584)³⁴, St. Francis

toute notre vie en la manière que Dieu le désire de nous; les prier qu'ils nous offrent à Notre-Seigneur, qu'ils se servent de nous pour le glorifier, qu'ils lui rendent pour nous tous les devoirs que nous aurions dû lui rendre en notre naissance, et qu'ils nous obtiennent de lui, par leurs prières, nouvelle grâce et force pour commencer un nouvelle vie, qui désormais soit toute consacrée à la gloire de la sienne" (ibidem, p. 504). "Pour conclusion de cet exercice sur le sujet du saint Baptême, il faut remercier Notre-Seigneur des grâces qu'il vous y a faites, lui demandant pardon des fautes que vous y avez commises; vous offrir à la sainte Vierge, à votre saint Ange gardien, aux saints Anges qui ont assisté à votre Baptême, au Saint duquel vous y avez reçu le nom, et à tous les autres Anges et Saints; les prier qu'ils vous offrent à Jésus, qu'ils le remercient pour vous, qu'ils lui rendent pour vous tous les devoirs que vous auriez dû lui rendre en votre Baptême, si vous aviez eu l'usage de raison; et qu'ils vous obtiennent de lui la grâce d'accomplir parfaitement tous les saints désirs et résolutions qu'il vous a données dans cet exercice" (ibidem, p. 519).

³² Cf. *Le Mémorial de la Vie Ecclésiastique*, pp. 50-54.

³³ "Offrir à Notre-Seigneur, à sa très sainte Mère, aux saints Anges gardiens et aux Saints patrons du lieu, les âmes des personnes auxquelles nous avons à donner les sacrements, et les prier de les préparer à les recevoir dignement, et de conserver en elles la grâce qui leur sera donnée par les mêmes sacrements" (Dispositions générales pour l'administration des Sacrements: *ibidem*, p. 77). Priests, upon leaving the confessional, should recommend their penitents to their angels: "Offrir et donner à ce même Sauveur toutes les âmes qu'il lui a adressées ... Les offrir aussi et recommander à la très sacrée Vierge, à saint Joseph, à saint Gabriel, à tous les Anges et à tous les Saints, spécialement à leurs Anges gardiens et à leurs saints patrons (Ce que le Confesseur doit faire étant sorti du confessional: *ibidem*, pp. 82-83).

³⁴ His well known 'Protestatio' to his Guardian Angel is certainly an act of formal

de Sales (1567-1622)³⁵, and from the Society of Jesus: St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), St. Aloisius from Gonzaga (1568-1591)³⁶, St. John Berchmans (1599-1621)³⁷, and to Jeremias Drexel (1581-1639)³⁸. Finally, Leonhard Goffiné, O. Praem. (1648-1719) contributed perhaps as much as anyone to the dissemination of a popular consecration to the Angels with his *Christkatholische Handpostille*. First published in 1690, it was soon translated into every European language and enjoyed veritably innumerable re-editions; nearly one a year, in some places, for well over a century.³⁹

In the 19th Century devotion to the Holy Angels was expressly recommended by several provincial councils.⁴⁰ Thereafter, if not earlier, a consecration to the Holy Angels became a common part of popular piety. Such prayers became standard in popular prayer books and were recommended to the faithful.⁴¹

V. Confraternities in Honor of the Holy Angels

The provincial Council of Baltimore declared in 1866: “Opportunum etiam videtur *societates favere sanctis angelis*, maxime custodibus *colendis*, quam devotionem summopere omnibus inculcant patres.”⁴² This applies to Confraternities in honor of the Holy Angels which we present

devotion, i.e., a consecration, in which he designates his Guardian Angel as the executor of his testament before God (Cf. Appendix II, nr. 2).

³⁵ See Appendix II, nr. 3.

³⁶ Vincent KLÉE, *Quis ut Deus!*, p. 158.

³⁷ See Appendix II, nr. 4. St. John Eudes, St. John Berchmans and St. Francis de Sales also wrote a consecration to the Blessed Mother (cf. F. OPITZ, *Marienweihe*, Münster 1986, p. 87).

³⁸ See Appendix I, nr. 1.

³⁹ Cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* IV (c1963) 1036. See Appendix II, nr. 7.

⁴⁰ “Ils insistent sur la dévotion aux anges et anges gardiens à inculquer aux fidèles et aux enfants” (*Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 617). This matter was handled at the provincial councils of *Reims* (1853), *Ravenna* (1855), *Wien* (1858), *Urbino* (1859), *Prag* (1860), *Kolocsa* (1863), *Utrecht* (1865) and *Baltimore* (1866); cf. *ibidem*, 617-618.

⁴¹ A selection of such prayers may be found in Appendix II, nn. 1- 4 and 6-13; for more recent texts, see nn. 19 and 26-27.

⁴² *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 617.

in the following summary fashion. Alongside the confraternities, which were dedicated to the pious life through prayer and apostolate, there were also Military Orders in honor of the Holy Angels; especially in honor of St. Michael.

1. Military Orders

In Portugal, King Alfonso Henrique established the Military Order of the Wing of St. Michael around the year 1170.⁴³ After the dissolution of the monarchy in Portugal, this Military Order was restructured as a simple confraternity in 1910.

In France, King Louis XI found the Military Order of St. Michael in 1469 for the defense of the Faith and the Kingdom.⁴⁴ In a special consecration to St. Michael each knight obliged himself “d’employer tout ce que j’aurai de force pour la défense de la sainte religion”.⁴⁵

2. Common Confraternities

In nearly every Catholic land there were confraternities in honor of the Holy Angels, especially in honor of St. Michael.

a) In German-speaking Countries

In Cologne, Germany, the Archconfraternity of St. Michael was established in 1693. This confraternity had its own proper consecration to St. Michael the Archangel.⁴⁶

⁴³ Cf. G. MARANGONI, pp. 225-226; EVARISTO, pp. 56, 84. This Order was aggregated to the Cistercian Monastery at Alcobaça in what is presently the Diocese of Leiria-Fátima.

⁴⁴ G. R. Hudelston comments: “In 1469 King Louis XI founded the Order of St. Michael [at Mont Saint-Michel], and held the first chapter of its knights in the ‘salle des chevaliers’”, *Mont Saint-Michel*, in: *Catholic Encyclopedia* 10 (1911) 552.

Joseph Clemens of Cologne established a further Order of Knights in honor of St. Michael in Bavaria, Germany in 1721. Cf. F. R. MCGAHAN, *Military Orders of St. Michael*, in: *Catholic Encyclopedia* 10 (1911) 272.

⁴⁵ *Livre de prières à l’usage de messieurs les chevaliers de l’ordre de Saint-Michel et des personnes qui ont de la dévotion pour ce premier de tous les anges*, Paris 1730, pp. 220-222; see Appendix I, nr. 3.

⁴⁶ See Appendix I, nr. 2. An affiliated Confraternity was established at St. Michael’s Church in Altötting, Bavaria, in 1788.

In Vienna, Austria, St. Michael's Confraternity was founded in 1861 and spread quickly to many dioceses in Austria, Germany, and Italy. Its purpose was to support the Holy Father through prayers and donations (a mild Peter's Pence).⁴⁷

In 1868 *Saint Raphael's Society* was founded in Bavaria which, in imitation of St. Raphael, was dedicated to charitable services for emigrants. The Society spread to Austria, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, France and to the USA.⁴⁸

The *Confraternity of the holy Guardian Angels and of St. Michael the Archangel* attached to the Cistercian Monastery at Wilhering in Upper Austria goes back at least to the middle of the 19th Century.⁴⁹

b) In the French-speaking World

Already in the 15th Century there was a *Confraternity of the Angels* in Paris⁵⁰, from which a consecration to the Angels could be found – albeit in a Portuguese translation.⁵¹ At the initiative of Henri-Marie Boudon,⁵² the *Congregation in honor of the Queen of the Holy Angels and the Nine Choirs* was established at the minor seminary of Montmorillon in 1828 and aggregated to a similar Confraternity in Bordeaux.⁵³

In the latter half of the 19th Century arose a number of Confraternities in honor of the Holy Angels. Each had several degrees of memberships

⁴⁷ Cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* VII (1935) 163.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 618. There was also an Association of the Guardian Angel for the "Diaspora" that was established as a branch of the Society of the Child Jesus in 1894. In 1920 The Confraternity of the Guardian Angel gained its autonomy; shortly thereafter, though, it came to be aggregated to the Boniface Society (cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* IX (1967) 524).

⁴⁹ This Confraternity, about whose origin documentation is lacking, propagated a consecration to the Guardian Angel and to St. Michael (see Appendix I, nr. 7).

⁵⁰ Cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 617.

⁵¹ See Appendix I, nr. 10. The later *Congrégation des saints anges* in Fribourg, Switzerland, dating at least back to the beginning of the 19th Century, had a prayer requesting the assistance of St. Michael in battle and in death (cf. KLÉE, *Quis ut Deus!*, p. 149; he quotes from: *Manuel de la Congrégation des saints anges*, Fribourg³ 1836, pp. 127-128).

⁵² *La dévotion aux neuf chÉurs des saints Anges*, Paris 1755, especially pp. 358-393.

⁵³ Cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 617.

and each were marked by a particular consecration in honor of the Angels.⁵⁴ These consecrations were made during a particular ceremony which took place before or after Holy Mass. At the first level of membership – a kind of formation or trial period – the candidate was allowed to make a consecration to the Guardian Angel whom he promised to venerate. At the second degree of membership, the candidate consecrated himself to all the Holy Angels obliging himself to avoid every sin and to imitate the Holy Angels; particularly their humility, purity, obedience, and zeal for the glory of God. At the third or highest level, the member consecrates himself to “St. Michael and to all the heavenly hosts” whereby he promises:

J’ai fortement résolu et me propose de nouveau de ne vous contrister jamais en me refusant à vos si douces inspirations, de me dévouer à votre culte, de mettre tout en Œuvre pour vous gagner les hommages des autres, de vous consoler de l’ingratitude de ceux qui oublient vos bienfaits si multiples.⁵⁵

The *(Arch)confraternity of St. Michael the Archangel from Mont St. Michel* was erected on October 16, 1867 and already in 1874 raised to an archconfraternity.⁵⁶ Today, many confraternities from around the world are aggregated to it. Among others, *St. Michael’s Squadron*, “une union de prières des enfants de France auprès de saint Michel pour obtenir le retour de la France à sa vocation d’accomplir les gestes de Dieu dans le monde”.⁵⁷ Admission into each of these confraternities is simply by way of inscription. However, the Archconfraternity does offer a consecration to its members.⁵⁸

c) Spain

Among others the *Association of the Holy Angels* for pupils merits mention.⁵⁹ Two degrees of consecrations to the Holy Angels were part of

⁵⁴ Cf. V. KLÉE, *Les plus beaux textes sur les saints Anges* I, Paris 1984, pp. 137-140; he refers to the work: *Les anges de Dieu amis des hommes*, Clermont-Ferrand ³1872, pp. 346-352.

⁵⁵ See Appendix I, nr. 5.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 618.

⁵⁷ V. KLÉE, *Quis ut Deus!*, p. 195.

⁵⁸ See Appendix II, nr. 22.

⁵⁹ This association stood under the direction of religious sisters. At the admission

the official program. In them, the candidates promised to strive for perfection with the help of the Holy Angels and in imitation of them. Every week the members recited a consecration to the Guardian Angel. On the feast day of the society, a promise of fidelity was recited in the name of all.⁶⁰

d) Portugal

In addition to the Military Order of the Wing of St. Michael, other confraternities in honor of St. Michael are known to have existed in Coimbra, Evora, Viseu and Braga.⁶¹ In fact, until the middle of the last century, there was scarcely a church in all of Portugal that did not have a branch of St. Michael's Confraternity erected in it.⁶²

e) Italy

In Italy there were various confraternities in honor of the angels. Some of the more important may be listed:

1) The *Archconfraternity of the Holy Guardian Angels* has its headquarters at the Lateran Basilica in Rome.⁶³ No consecration is foreseen for admission into the Confraternity. The members pursue this ideal: "Costituire una viva comunità ecclesiale che aiuti i confratelli a realizzare pienamente la propria vocazione cristiana mediante una intensa vita spirituale ed una efficace operosità apostolica."⁶⁴

ceremony, after the consecration, the candidates received a blessed medal in honor of the angels. (*Manual de la Asociación de los Santos Ángeles*, Madrid 1906, p. 35). Here too devotion to Mary and to the holy Angels were closely connected.

⁶⁰ *Manual de la Asociación*, pp. 37 and 38; Our Lady of the Angels, August 2, was the principal feast of the Association (cf. p. 29).

⁶¹ C. EVARISTO, *The Many Apparitions*, p. 86.

⁶² "There was not one church in Portugal that did not have an image of St. Michael, the Guardian Angel of Portugal, or an established branch of the Confraternity. At every funeral there was carried before the coffin of the deceased the banner of St. Michael, the 'Liberator of souls'" (*ibidem*, p. 56).

⁶³ This Confraternity was approved by Pope Paul V in 1614 and elevated to archconfraternity in 1621. The right of aggregation is already mentioned by Pope Gregory XV in 1622. The *Confraternity of the Guardian Angel* from Lyon, France, is among the aggregated confraternities.

⁶⁴ *Statuto della ven. Arciconfraternità dei Santi Angeli Custodi in Roma*, approved by the Vicariate of Rome on May 25, 1985 (Prot. N. 520/87/37), art. 1.

Among the duties, the former statutes (approved on Sept. 11, 1845, but actually dating back to the early 18th Century) foresaw the daily participation at Mass or at least a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, a daily sacrifice in honor of the Guardian Angel, the veneration of the Guardian Angel and the Mother of God, the frequent reception of the sacraments along with a devotion to the Holy Cross.⁶⁵

2) The *Pious Union of St. Michael the Archangel* was approved by Pope Leo XIII on August 30, 1879 and transferred that same year to the *Chiesa di Sant'Angelo in Pescheria*, Rome. Later this church together with the confraternity was entrusted to the care of the Caracciolini Fathers (*Ordo Clericorum Regularium Minorum*).⁶⁶

In the statutes we read:

Scopo della Pia Unione è quello di onorare i santi Angeli, e più particolarmente l'*Arcangelo S. Michele*, per ottenere, mediante il suo aiuto speciale:

- a) La difesa e l'esaltazione della santa Chiesa.
- b) L'estirpazione delle eresie, degli errori e delle false dottrine; la cessazione delle bestemmie e degli scandali, e la conversione di tutti i peccatori.
- c) Lo spirito di dolcezza e l'umiltà del cuore, con un grande accrescimento di Fede, di Speranza, di Carità.
- d) Lo stabilimento del Regno di Dio nelle anime nostre, sotto il potente patrocinio della Vergine Immacolata e per mezzo dei Santi Angeli.
- e) La liberazione delle anime del Purgatorio.
- f) La grazia di una buona e santa morte.⁶⁷

The three conditions for admission were: 1) the wish to voluntarily place oneself under the banner of St. Michael "con la professione aperta e generosa degli impegni derivanti dal santo Battesimo"; 2) to take part in

⁶⁵ Cf. *Esercizi da farsi da' Fratelli della Ven. Arciconfraternità de' SS. Angeli Custodi di Roma nella loro Chiesa, nelli giorni, ne' quali vi si espone il Legno della Santa Croce*, Roma 1727.

⁶⁶ This Pious Union had received the privilege of a plenary indulgence for new members at their inscription and for five different feasts celebrated by the group. (*Pia Unione di S. Michele Arcangelo*, 5th reprinting, Rome [dateless], pp. 16-17; cf. Decree of the Sacra Penitenzieria Apostolica from December 2, 1967). In 1880 it was raised to be an Archconfraternity (cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* VII (1935) 164).

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 7-8.

the spiritual battle against the Evil One “in armonia con gli impegni e il carattere della Cresima”; 3) to collaborate zealously so that the Kingdom of God be consolidated in souls.⁶⁸

At admission the candidate receives either the scapular or the medal of St. Michael, upon which occasion the following prayer is recited:

Ti preghiamo di benedire questo segno, istituito per infondere ed accrescere la devozione in tanto Patrono, e tutti quelli che lo custodiscono con devozione affinché, corroborati dall’ aiuto dello stesso Arcangelo, sia loro concesso di superare i nemici dell’ anima e del corpo.⁶⁹

The manual contains two consecrations to St. Michael.⁷⁰

Monthly the members of the Confraternity gather for the celebration of the Holy Mass. On that occasion they pray a consecration to the Angels and recite the Chaplet of St. Michael in honor of the nine choirs of Angels.⁷¹

3) There were a good number of other confraternities of angels and among them was one for priests, about which, unfortunately, little is known.⁷²

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 19-21. The rite was approved by the Congregation of Rites on August 22, 1883.

⁷⁰ See Appendix I, nr. 6.

⁷¹ *Pia Unione di S. Michele Arcangelo*, pp. 23. 29-30. The chaplet of St. Michael was recommended by Pope Pius IX and received an indulgence from the Congregation of Rites on August 8, 1851 (p. 30; cf. A. A. LINGS, *Our Favorite Devotions*, New York 1897, 335).

⁷² The following may be mentioned:

- 1) *Confraternità di Santo Angelo* (Michele) from Venice, erected in the 13th Century. It was established for priests (cf. MARANGONI, p. 172).
- 2) *The Confraternity of St. Raphael* for youth in Florence (cf. K. EISENBICHLER, *The boys of the Archangel Raphael: a youth confraternity in Florence, 1411-1785*, Toronto 1998).
- 3) *Congregazione dei SS. Angeli per le fanciulle cristiane* (see Appendix I, nr. 12).
- 4) According to J. Coret St. Charles Borromeo established a *Confraternity of the Holy Guardian Angels* in Milan (J. CORET, *L’Association ou la bonne mort sous la protection des saints anges gardiens instituée par saint Charles Borromée*, Saint-Omar 1732). To this confraternity apparently belongs the popular prayer of the saint addressed to his Guardian Angel, the “Protestation”, (cf. V. KLÉE, *Les plus beaux textes* II, pp. 77-78).
- 5) *Archconfraternity of the Holy Spirit and St. Michael*, which goes back to the 12th Century and which lays claim to being the oldest Confraternity of Angels in the

f) Poland

There were numerous Confraternities of the Guardian Angels in Poland, indeed more than 120 were established by the Order of St. Paul alone. These go back to the beginning of the 17th Century.⁷³

g) North America

Documentation is lacking for the older associations in honor of the angels in the USA, to which the already mentioned provincial council of Baltimore from 1866 makes reference (“societates ... sanctis angelis, maxime custodibus colendis”). But here may be adduced a few, more recent foundations.

1) The *Philangeli* was established in 1947 in England by Mary Angela Jeeves, with the view to spreading the knowledge and veneration of the Holy Angels among the faithful.⁷⁴ In the USA the Clerics of St. Viator

world. This Confraternity continues to meet monthly even today (Headquarters: Circonvallazione Trionfale, 23 / Rome, Italy. Tel. 06397-31361).

6) *Associazione Milizia di S. Michele Arcangelo*, founded in 1980 by Abbot Karl Egger, the restorer of the Canons Regular of Windesheim; the Association has its seat at their Monastery Santa Maria Regina in Tor Lupara, Italy. “L’Associazione ‘Milizia di San Michele Arcangelo’ promuove il culto di San Michele Arcangelo e, con il suo patrocinio, la difesa della Fede e della Morale cattolica. I suoi membri si impegnano a combattere contro tutte le forze del male” (*Statuto*, art. 1). Admission takes place through simple inscription.

⁷³ With the Bull “In supremo apostolice dignitatis culmine” dated August 30, 1624 Pope Urban VIII established the Confraternity of the Guardian Angel in the Churches belonging to the Order of St. Paul. With the papal decree from October 6, 1626 the priests of the Order of St. Paul were authorized to erect confraternities to the Guardian Angel in other parish churches and religious chapels.

At the time of admission the priest declared: “Ego auctoritate Sedis Apostolicae et Illustrissimi ac Reverendissimi Loci Ordinarii mihi concessa, recipio te (vos) in Confraternitatem Sancti Angeli Custodis, et admitto te (vos) ad participationem omnium indulgentiarum et communionem omnium meritorum, quae huius Confraternitatis Confratres sui virtuosis actibus hactenus apud Deum meruerunt, et in perpetuum merebuntur. In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sanctis. Amen.” Thereafter, the candidate recited the following prayer: “I, N. N., take you, my Guardian Angel, this day as my personal patron and protector. I implore you that you come to my aid in all my needs now and at the hour of my death; drive off the accursed enemy of my soul and deliver me to my Lord and God. Amen.” (Archive in Jasna Gora, szgn. 409, pp. 53-54; 1859, p. 4).

(Chicago, Illinois) took charge of spreading the devotion. To the simple prayers of invocation for help addressed to the Holy Angels the Clerics added a consecration to the Guardian Angel and another to all the angels. One of these derives from their Founder, Fr. Louis Querbes.⁷⁵ Admission into the Philangeli, however, is simply by inscription; the members are merely encouraged to make the consecrations.⁷⁶

2) In 1996 *The Society of St. Raphael*, whose purpose is to offer guidance to doctors in the midst of the increasingly great moral confusion that hampers the medical field, was erected in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in the USA.

⁷⁴ A Philangeli Brochure from 1956 enumerates these "Particular duties of Members":

- 1) To remember the presence of God; to respect the Holy Angels; to be and show themselves resolutely Catholic; never to give their names to condemned sects, and to combat them; to edify their neighbors and above all to receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist often.
- 2) To say one prayer daily for the objectives of the Pious Association of the Philangeli.
- 3) Priests are asked to make a daily memento in their Masses.
- 4) Religious are asked for a daily intention in unison with some prayer to the Holy Angels that they already say.
- 5) Lay members are asked to say one prayer daily from the leaflet [these are prayers to the Holy Angels].
- 6) To celebrate the feasts of the Philangeli [namely, the feasts of the Holy Angels in the Roman Liturgy at that time].
- 7) To make when possible an annual retreat of a few days.
- 8) Members are encouraged to wear a medal of the Holy Angels and to keep a picture of the angels in their room.

Additionally it is said there: "Philangeli have a particular devotion to the Holy Trinity, especially to the Holy Spirit, and our Lady Queen of the Angels. They have a custom, though not a rule, of greeting the Guardian Angels of all whom they meet."

⁷⁵ See Appendix I, nr. 4.

⁷⁶ In 1965, twelve years after the founding in England the movement already had 140 000 members in Sydney, Australia, alone (cf. *Philangeli*, in: *L'Ange Gardien*, March 1962, p. 5). A Philangeli flyer from 1970 estimated world membership at 500 000 persons. Today the figure of one million members is given.

VI. Religious Communities with a Special Link to the Holy Angels

A number of communities confess their bond to the Holy Angels through their very name.⁷⁷ Certain other religious communities have chosen the Holy Angels as their protectors and/or patrons. In this way, the *Minims* of St. Francis of Paola⁷⁸, the Passionists⁷⁹, the Religious Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Coutances (Lille, France)⁸⁰ all venerate St. Michael as their Protector/Patron.

In the following paragraphs a number of religious communities are mentioned which, in their spirituality or in their Apostolate, have cultivated a special devotion to the Holy Angels.

⁷⁷ Among male religious communities we may mention:

- 1) *Congregation of the [School] Brothers of St Gabriel* which was founded by St. Louis Maria de Montfort in 1705. The community really only developed, however, after its fusion with a similar community founded by G. Deshayes in 1835 (cf. F. STEELE, *Brothers of St. Gabriel*, in: *Catholic Encyclopedia*).
- 2) *Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel* (also called “Michaelites”), founded in Poland in 1897; cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* VII (31998) 231.

More numerous are the female communities; we mention only those of papal right:

- 1) *Suore degli Angeli* (Zgromadzenie Sióstr od Aniolów) in Warsaw, Poland;
- 2) *Suore Angeliche di S. Paolo* in Rome, Italy;
- 3) *Sisters of the Holy Angels* in Sri Lanka;
- 4) *Irmãs dos Santos Anjos* in Brazil;
- 5) *Hermanas de los Santos Angeles Custodios* in Madrid, Spain;
- 6) *Hermanas del Santo Angel de la Guarda* in Madrid, founded by Fr. Luis Ormières (1809-1890) with the finality of practicing angelic kindness and solicitude among the small and the weak;
- 7) *Suore di S. Michele Arcangelo* (Siostry Michalitki);
- 8) *Hermanas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús y de los Santos Ángeles* in Saragossa, Spain;
- 9) *Suore degli Angeli Adoratrici della SS. Trinità* in Naples, Italy.

⁷⁸ The members of the Minims continue today to address a special prayer to St. Michael as their patron (cf. *Preghiamo*, published by the Curia Generalitia of the Order of Minims, Rome 1993, pp. 144-145. The prayer was also contained in their earlier *Manuale di preghiere per i religiosi minimi*, Rome 1960, pp. 169-171.

⁷⁹ Together with St. Michael the Passionists venerate the Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph as their patrons.

⁸⁰ See their prayer in Appendix I, nr. 13.

1. Society of Jesus (1540)

The significance of the Holy Angels in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola is already sufficient occasion to advert to the efficacious help of the Holy Angels. This is particularly true with respect to the “Regulae aliquot ad motus animae, quos diversi excitant spiritus, discernendos, ut boni solum admitantur, et pellantur mali”.⁸¹ Beyond this, St. Ignatius exhorted his spiritual sons to imitate the angels in their holy purity.⁸² Mention has already been made concerning the great influence the Jesuits had in spreading the devotion and the consecration to the Holy Angels in the 17th Century.

2. Ordo Clericorum Regularium Minorum (1588)

The founders of this order, St. Francis, Fabrizio Caracciolo and venerable Agostino Adorno, chose St. Michael the Archangel as the community’s principal patron.⁸³ From the very foundation of the community every church has an altar dedicated to St. Michael; in every community special prayers are addressed to him.

É loro particolare iniziativa la recita della “Corona di S. Michele”, devozione oggi diffusa in Italia, Germania, Francia, Spagna, USA, India e varie nazioni dell’Africa. Fin dalla fine del 1600 questa pratica era vissuta dai CC.RR.MM.⁸⁴

It is they who have been entrusted with the pastoral assistance of the already discussed *Pia Unione di S. Michele Arcangelo* in Rome.

3. The Clerics of San Viator (1835)

The Clerics of San Viator were founded by the *Curé Louis Joseph Querbes* (1793-1859) in the Archdiocese of Lyon, France. Their principal apostolate of education was to be carried out in intimate collaboration

⁸¹ St. IGNATIUS, *Exercitia Spiritualia. Editio vulgata*, nr. 313.

⁸² “Quae ad votum castitatis pertinent, interpretatione non indigent, cum constet, quam sit perfecte observanda, nempe enitendo angelicam puritatem imitari et corporis et mentis nostrae munditia” (IGNATIUS, *summarium constitutionem*, nr. 28; cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite* I, 604).

⁸³ Mario SALON, *Presentazione*, in: G. MARANGONI, *Grandezze dell’Arcangelo S. Michele*, Roma 1994.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, cf. pp. XXXVIII and 261.

with the holy Guardian Angels. Fr. Querbes wrote: “Le clerc de St. Viator s’efforcera de développer une confiance ferme et virile à l’égard de son Ange Gardien, des Anges de ses élèves ou des personnes avec qui il doit traiter”, and: “Ayez une grande dévotion aux Anges Gardiens de vos écoliers; adressez-vous à eux; recommandez-leur souvent tout ce qui les regarde.”⁸⁵

Fr. Querbes drew up statutes for an *Association of the Holy Angels* for children and composed a consecration to the angels.⁸⁶ The San Viator Confraternity of the Angels that was established in Lyon in 1884 traces its origin back to him.⁸⁷ As already mentioned, the community has spread worldwide Fr. Querbes’ consecration to the Holy Angels through the Philangeli.⁸⁸ While the constitutions of the Clerics of San Viator do not foresee any consecration, their *Eucologue* recommended that members make a special “Acte de Dévouement au saint Ange Gardien”.⁸⁹

4. Suore degli Angeli Adoratrici della SS. Trinità (1891)

The *Suore degli Angeli Adoratrici della SS. Trinità*, also called the “Ordine Angelico”, was founded by Mother Maria Serafina Micheli in Naples in 1891.⁹⁰ The sisters strive after a special union with the Holy Angels as their helpers and models on the path to God. Mother Serafina wrote: “Le suore degli Angeli devono unire i loro pensieri a quegli Spiriti Celesti che sono occupati a contemplare l’immensa bontà di Dio.”⁹¹ At

⁸⁵ Cited from the Canadian Magazine published by the community: *L’Ange Gardien*, March 1963, p. 2. The magazine dates back to the founding generation, cf. E. V. CARDINAL, *Viatorians*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 14 (1967) 637.

⁸⁶ Communication from the chronicler, F. R. Bonnafous (Letter from October 6, 1998) containing copies of documents from their archives in Rodez, France (Direction générale, nr. 520). For the consecration, see Appendix I, nr. 4.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* I, 617. This confraternity was aggregated to the Roman Archconfraternity of the Holy Angels on March 19, 1892. A branch of the confraternity was erected in Bogotá, Colombia (see Appendix I, nr. 8).

⁸⁸ See Appendix I, 16b.

⁸⁹ *Eucologue des Clercs de Saint-Viateur*, Montréal 1928, pp. 148-149 (see Appendix I, nr. 14). The community’s magazine, *L’Ange Gardien*, Lyon (distinct from their Canadian magazine of the same title) appears bimonthly and is currently in its 110th year of publication.

⁹⁰ *Suor Maria Serafina Michele e le Suore degli Angeli nella Chiesa e nella Società*, Atti del Convegno di Studio, Ariccia 20-21 settembre 1991, Napoli 1993.

the head of the community's constitutions from 1985 one reads:

Come gli angeli sono in continua adorazione e contemplazione della Triade Sacrosanta, così le Suore degli Angeli si uniranno agli Angeli stessi per benedire e lodare Iddio nelle Tre Auguste Persone, specialmente per mezzo dell'Eucaristia, e per svolgere la loro missione al servizio dei fratelli.⁹²

At a congress sponsored by the community, Archbishop Antonio Ambrosanio from Naples declared:

Si, la vostra vita si realizza perfettamente nella misura in cui voi vivete l'unione angelica; in questa unione voi avete la realizzazione matura, piena, della vostre comunità. [...] Voi dunque dovete essere tutte come gli Angeli di Dio. Questa trasformazione spirituale costituisce la vostra vocazione speciale nella Chiesa.⁹³

Recapitulation

Every consecration within the Church has its foundation in the Baptismal Promises. They originate in the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, that is, in the Mystery of Redemption. Their goal is the sanctification of man and the glorification of God. In addition to the consecrations linked to the very sacraments and the religious consecration of one's life to God according to the evangelical counsels, the Church also acknowledges the so-called devotional consecrations to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Mary. The consecration to Mary is ultimately a consecration to Jesus Christ on the basis of her maternal mediation, which

ex beneplacito divino exoritur et ex superabundantia meritorum Christi profluit, Eius mediationi innititur, ab illa omnino dependet, ex eademque totam virtutem haurit; unionem autem immediatam credentium cum Christo nullo modo impedit sed fovet.⁹⁴

⁹¹ *Regola dell'Ordine angelico*, Cap. 3: Unione Angelica, art. 12 (Napoli 1996, p. 16). "L'unione angelica' risiede come carisma speciale di una vita consacrata tesa interamente all'unione con Dio-Trinità in pensieri, in parole e in opere, cioè nella contemplazione, nella lode e nei servizi" (A. AMBROSANIO, *La Spiritualità e la Pietà di M. Serafina Michele*, in: *Suor Maria Serafina*, p. 93).

⁹² Istituto delle Suore degli Angeli, *Costituzioni e Direttorio*, Napoli 1985, art. 1.

⁹³ Antonio AMBROSANIO, *Come gli Angeli* [from a conference given at the Congress in Faicchio, 12-14th Dec. 1978] Napoli 1979, pp. 57 and 66.

⁹⁴ *Lumen gentium* 60.

Similarly, the Holy Angels also have a mediational position and a salvific mission in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ: “Nei momenti-chiave circondano il Cristo e lo accompagnano nell’adempimento della sua missione salvifica nei riguardi degli uomini”.⁹⁵ As such, they too are fitting recipients of devotion which can be developed more perfectly through a consecration analogous to the consecration to Mary.

From the earliest days of Church, the faithful honored the angels. Churches were soon consecrated in their honor and the people of God placed itself under their protection and patronage. When, after the Council of Trent, the consecrations to the Heart of Jesus and to Mary began to flourish, there appeared in many places other consecrations to the Holy Angels, which in the 19th Century became a very widespread and acknowledged exercise of Christian piety. Many associations linked the admission of new members to such consecrations. The Church accepted these confraternities, fostered them and sanctioned their prayers of consecration. They were deemed good and salutary both for the individual as well as for the association.

In the consecration to the Holy Angels, the mystery of the Church finds expression, namely in the unity of the pilgrim and the triumphant Church. Augustine writes:

By the Church here we are to understand the whole Church, not just the part that journeys here on earth..., but also that part which, in heaven, has always, from creation, held fast to God, and which never experienced the evils of a fall. This part, composed of the Holy Angels, remains in blessedness, and it gives help, even as it ought, to the other part still on pilgrimage. For both parts together will make one eternal consort, as even now they are one in the bond of love – the whole instituted for the proper worship of the one God.⁹⁶

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⁹⁵ Pope JOHN PAUL II, General audience, July 30, 1986, in: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, IX/2 (1986) p. 304.

⁹⁶ St. AUGUSTINE, *Enchiridion*, ch. XV.