

**Homily – Feast of the Holy Archangels
Blue Mass – September 29, 2023**

The readings today invite us to celebrate and imitate the Archangels. The Lord presents Nathanael as an “angel” because he “is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him.” Angels are spiritual beings created by God for his service, to act as messengers and agents between him and human beings, and to care and protect God’s creatures and plan. Angels help reveal and remind us of the transcendent dimension that each of us has. Pope Francis says that the Archangels “played an important role in the history of salvation,” and they also “play an important role in our journey towards salvation.”

The most relevant aspects in the history of our lives, as well as in the history of our communities and world history, are not the noisy and striking events, but those which transcend, while remaining underneath front covers: encounters, friendships, faithful relationships, and service. Much like the angels, first responders do not often appear on front covers. However, their jobs are very transcendent. They are the community’s servants, relational agents, caretakers, and protectors. They are custodians of peace, as they are entrusted with the use of force in the name of all to look after the good will of the people they serve.

Saint Michael, the archangel, who appears in the Book of Revelation fighting and defeating the dragon, symbolizes the struggle of the human person against evil. Saint Gabriel, the archangel, was blessed to deliver to Mary – in God’s name – the

message most awaited by all of humanity. He is a symbol of all **mediators and all mediations** between God, us and others. Saint Raphael, the archangel, who was responsible for **healing, alleviating the pain of the soul and healing bodily illnesses**, is a symbol for **God's provident love** through human "Samaritans."

In the Gospel, Nathanael gives himself no importance, and is even surprised that Jesus knows him. Jesus presents him to us today as a model. His authenticity and truthfulness remind us that all good things come from a healthy and clean heart. God knows us better than we know ourselves. What other may admire in us, and even what we might like about ourselves, may not be our main feature in God's eyes. All we need is a pure heart, open to the Holy Spirit. He will take care of the rest.

Angels bear God's "signature". The respect that sacred writers show for God is such that they usually avoid placing Him in the first person. In his place, they put angels. Michael means "who is like God"; Gabriel, "God's strength;" and Raphael, "God's medicine." To believe in angels is to believe in the transcendent presence of God. Saint John says that the angels of God will ascend and descend on the Son of Man. (Cf. Jn 1:51).

May this feast encourage you to be, and only then, to appear, in such a way that you too may be mistaken for angels. And may Our Lady of Guadalupe protect you and care for you always.