



ST. LUKE'S  
Episcopal Church

BUFFALO,  
Wyoming

This past Sunday was the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels; and it was also the day we baptized Hope Lawrence into the household of God. Last Thursday I came across a podcast from *The Living Church* where the host, Amber Noel, interviewed Fr. James Dominic Brent, a Dominican Friar who lives at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, and the title of the episode was, “Angels and Demons (but mostly Angels).”

In that episode Fr. James was discussing the mystery of the angelic hierarchy (which, by the way, was a word coined by a priest to divide the angels into orders) and he pointed out something interesting: the mystery of the hierarchy is based in service; and not only service, but reversed service.

If you think about all of creation, the order of beings is God – Angels - humans. This is reflected in Hebrews 8:7 when the author writes, “You have made [humans] for a little while lower than the angels.”

You might normally think that humans, being the lowest of those beings, would serve the angels, who would then serve God. But Fr. James pointed out that this wasn't necessarily so. The mystery of the hierarchy is that the higher serve the lower. Angels serve and protect humans (think guardian angels, or the angels that protected Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah). Archangels serve angels. And God, in a stunning turn, also serves humanity. This is most clearly shown in Philippians 2:6-8 when Paul writes that Jesus, though in the form of God, took human form and humbled himself, and in John 13:5 when Jesus washes the feet of the disciples.

If this angelic hierarchy is arranged in a “reversed service,” with even God serving us, the lowest of these forms, then what does that say about how we are to act and behave toward others? Is there not only a mandate to care for the lowly, oppressed, and outcast because that's the right thing to do, but shouldn't we be serving the lowly, oppressed, and outcast because that is, in fact, the system God has ordained: the higher serves the lower.

Who do you see as “lower” than yourself, and how are you serving them?

Blessings,

Todd+

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