

“And there was war in heaven” (Revelation 12:7)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in our life in this world we go through many trials and challenges. And there are times when our burden becomes increasingly heavy and difficult to bear. Our problems threaten to choke us at every turn. But through all these we must remain even more steadfast. Whatever comes to us in life, we must remain strong.

Through the vicissitudes of life let us not surrender. Let us not be afraid. We must not let go. And when all these come to us let us all the more call on God; let us all the more trust him. During the times when we face rejection or temptation, we must go nearer to God, imploring Him, listening to Him, following His plan for us, obeying His will. Why do I tell you all this? It is because this was what happened to our patron, Saint Michael the Archangel. And I invite you now to reflect on the lessons he imparts and his example that we can apply them in our life.

First, Be fearless in fighting for what is right.

Second, Always defend God’s creation.

Third, Know that with and for God, we are assured victory.

“And there was war in heaven” (Revelation 12:7) and a rebellion against God, creating a division. Michael and his angels fought against the group of Lucifer who sided with the Dragon or Satan and turned their backs on God, in their arrogance and deceit.

But Michael’s group of angels remained with God, unwavering in loyalty. Michael chose God, saying *“serviam”*, *“I will serve.”* Michael and his angels stood firmly for God, fought the detractors and defeated Lucifer and the Dragon.

Brothers and sisters, like our patron Saint Michael we should be firm and steadfast in our goals. We should be strong in carrying out our mission. We should fight with courage the wrong and evil that we see; that threaten goodness and peace.

I am sure that we will be constantly tested; money and other material emoluments can be dangled before us. If we are in positions of power and influence we can expect many to sidle up to us to use us for their vested interests no matter how inimical these are to the welfare of the people. But we must not waver and compromise our principles, just because of friendship or political and economic alliances. It is important to preserve our good name and our promise to God to be always on His side. Look up to San Miguel and remember always that like him we must be ready to fight for what is right and good for God’s people and His creation that He has entrusted to us.

And this brings us to our second point. In being strong and steadfast like Saint Michael it follows that we will likewise in our defense of those God has created. Saint Michael showed that he would manifest his allegiance to God through service. To serve means that we use our talent and

capabilities—which God has given us—for the welfare and good of those under our care; that we make sure that God’s people and creation are not brought to danger, destruction and death.

Saint Michael teaches us that our service should be directed towards fighting evil and everything else that destroys, so that what will reign will be goodness and righteousness. Saint Michael’s brand of service is shown by the way he guarded the Kingdom. As head of the heavenly host he gave the prime example of obedience to God. He did not concern himself with personal matters or self-interest. He proclaimed that God should be known, obeyed and taken to heart. He exposed the agenda of the Dragon that was Satan and all those who followed Lucifer. And now it falls on us as followers of Saint Michael to obey God and to defend Him always.

How do we do this, my dear brothers and sisters? One way of defending God is to value our life, to make full use of the gifts that God gives us and not fall into the wiles of our modern dragon of addiction to gambling, alcoholism, illegal drugs. And if a place or a thing or another person has become a “Satan” that brings us to danger and sin, let us be bold in avoiding them, and resolutely turn our backs on them, change our ways and if necessary, bring these types of operations to the knowledge of the authorities. And this, brothers and sisters, is how you can serve and defend yourself and others, like Saint Michael.

As I mentioned earlier, one way Saint Michael defended the Kingdom of God, is to battle the Dragon, so that heaven will not come under the dominion of the Satan and his malevolent angels.

In the same manner, we should defend our earthly home, God’s kingdom on earth, and all the people and creation on it, nature and the environment. We should not allow our earthly kingdom, the land and air and water that encompass it, the water and the fishes, the mangroves to be polluted, destroyed and extinguished, to feed the greed and lust for profit of people. Defending our kingdom also means that we do not shortchange ourselves; that we do not settle for menial jobs in hostile places and worst, to end up trafficked and prostituted because we fell into the empty promises of employment abroad. Closer to home, let us not shatter our provincial peace and environment and orderly life with the revival of the Nuclear power plant and the opening of more coal plants. We know the danger and risks to health and the environment that these operations will bring about.

Let us remember and reflect on service and defence of good. Service is for protection. Like Saint Michael let us serve God and be defenders of the faith and all His creation.

Lastly... From Revelations we learn what happened to Saint Michael? He was victorious. He did not fail. He was not defeated by anyone. God gave him victory. And this is the third lesson for us for this feast of our beloved patron Saint Michael. We, too, will triumph. It is God’s desire to that we overcome all the tribulations of life and emerge victorious. He does not wish that we

stumble or wallow in suffering and pain. God will lift us up. He will take us by the hand and raise us. He will restore us in His embrace.

Thus it behooves us to follow the example of Saint Michael. If we choose God, if we side with God, we will not be shackled by the trials and burdens of our mortal life. Like Saint Michael, if we accept God in our life and if we obey His commandments and precepts, and fight for His Kingdom we have nothing to fear. And in our life we will be assured of victory.

After our celebration of the Holy Eucharist at eight thirty in the morning at Bahay Puso, we returned to the College Seminary, the Virgen Milagrosa del Rosario, and partook of breakfast. We invited a man who was installing the curtains at the refectory of the seminary to join us at breakfast. A conversation ensued. The man respectfully asked, "Where did you celebrate Mass?" He replied that the Mass was held at a Sitio in a town in Bataan. He recognized that the place was where he came from, and he became concerned. The man said, "*I am a native of that town, but even if that were so, I would don't go there nor would I ever go there.*" He added, "*Weren't you afraid to go there?*"

He answered, "*Why would I be afraid. God is with me and what I do is for Him.*" He gently told the man, "*This is the work, the mission that God has handed to me.*"

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this is our mission now: Like Saint Michael we should be fearless in fighting for the truth and for what is right. We should always defend God and all His creation. And if we work and serve for God, He will make us victorious.

✠Ruperto Cruz Santos, DD
Bishop of Balanga and CBCP Permanent Council member