

- 116 The Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great mentions nine angelic orders. We read: "Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Powers, and the many-eyed Cherubim praise you; around you stand the Seraphim." The angelic orders are called "choirs" because of their communion with God and with one another. Unceasingly, the angels offer "praise to God" as they abide in the light of God's glory.
- 117 In Holy Scripture, angels manifest the presence of God in the world, announcing to human beings the will of God. Holy Scripture refers to some of them by name: Michael (see Rev 12:7; Jude 1:9), Raphael (see Tob 12:15), Gabriel (see Lk 1:19, 26). Angels assist human beings in their spiritual growth (see Heb 1:14). The Tradition of the Church teaches that God grants every human being a guardian angel: "You appointed angels as guardians."<sup>93</sup> The unity of the visible and invisible creation—human beings and angels—becomes manifest in the Divine Liturgy, where the earthly expresses the heavenly, and humans serve together with angels: "Let us who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the Thrice-holy Hymn to the life giving Trinity..." and "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of your glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."<sup>94</sup>

*For you fashioned a man by taking dust from the earth.  
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

### **3. Humankind—the Crown of Creation**

- 118 "Lord ... what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than God, and crown him with glory and honour. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet" (Ps 8:1, 4-6). With these words Holy Scripture extols humankind. The Lord God set humanity to govern creation: "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Gn 1:26).

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<sup>93</sup> Liturgicon, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Anaphora.

<sup>94</sup> Liturgicon, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Cherubic Hymn, Anaphora.

- 119 In the course of six days God creates the world, preparing it for humankind: "It was not to be looked for that the ruler should appear before the subjects of his rule; but when his dominion was prepared, the next step was that the king should be revealed."<sup>95</sup> Having created humankind, God crowns his creation. "In what then does the greatness of humankind consist, according to the doctrine of the Church? Not in his likeness to the created world, but in his being in the image of the nature of the Creator."<sup>96</sup>
- 120 Based on the above, Gregory of Nyssa teaches that the dignity of the human being lies in the fact that by its very nature humanity is higher than all creation, since it was created in the royal image of its creator and freely and with full authority rules over its desires.<sup>97</sup> The dignity of humankind is in the image of God. The Lord himself preserves human dignity as inviolable and cares for the human being:

Who else is there that ministers to you more faithfully than I? All creation I created to serve you; the heaven and the earth serve you: the one with its moisture, the other with its fruits. For your sake the sun serves with its light and with its warmth, and the moon and the stars lighten the night. For your sake the clouds nourish the earth with rain, and the earth brings forth all manner of grasses with their seeds and the trees with their fruits to serve you. For your sake the rivers bear fish and the wastes rear beasts.<sup>98</sup>

*For you fashioned a man by taking dust from the earth,  
and honoured him, O God, with your own image.  
You placed him in the Paradise of delight.  
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

**a. Humankind—in the Image and Likeness of God**

- 121 The Book of Genesis reveals a profound bond between humankind and God: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Gn 1:26). In his commentary upon these words, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons explains: "The image of God is the Son, according to whose image humankind was made; and for this reason he appeared in the last times, to render the image like himself."<sup>99</sup> It was precisely in the

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<sup>95</sup> GREGORY OF NYSSA, On the Making of Man, 2: PG 44,132. <sup>96</sup> GREGORY OF NYSSA, On the Making of Man, 16, PG 44,177.

<sup>97</sup> See GREGORY OF NYSSA On the Making of Man, 3-4: PG 44,134-136.

<sup>98</sup> KIRILL OF TUROV, Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Easter.

<sup>99</sup> IRENAEUS OF LYONS, Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, 22.