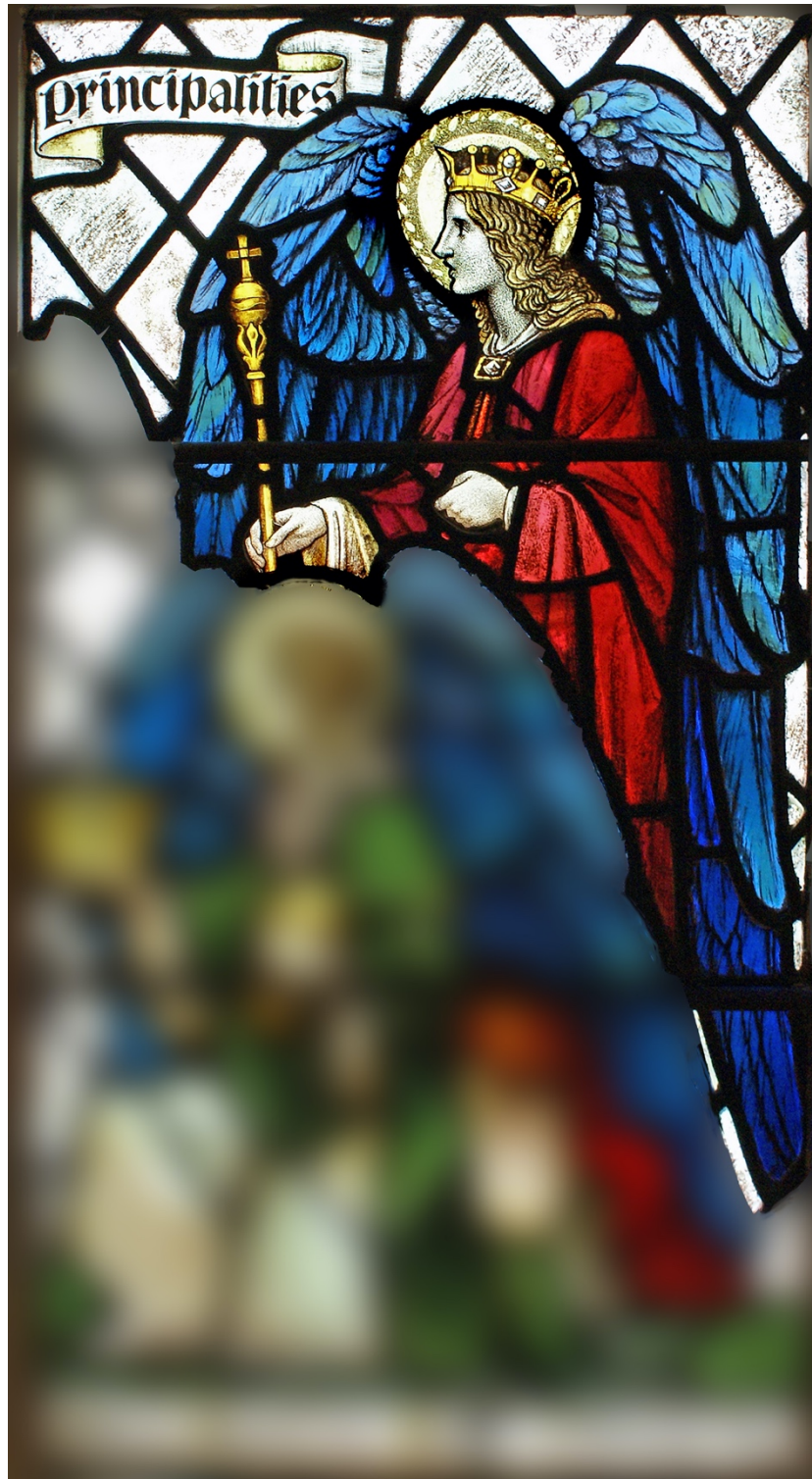


Lent Reflections on the Stained-Glass Windows



Principality

Thursday in the First Week of Lent

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, 13: 1-7

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrong-doing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Commentary

The third sphere of the Angelic Hierarchy belong to those angels who are heavenly messengers to those on earth.

Principalities (also called 'Princedom' or 'Rulers') are often depicted, as in our stained-glass window, wearing a crown and carrying a sceptre to direct God's works. They are so named because they have charge over the lower angels – the Archangels and Angels - and instruct them as to the fulfilling the Divine command.

St Thomas Aquinas explains it, in a rather beautiful way, in musical terms. He likens their leadership role to that of what we now call the conductor of a choir or orchestra: "Now in the execution of any action, there are beginners and leaders; as in singing, the precentors..." It gives us the image of an angelic choir or orchestra all making a concerted and harmonious effort together, in their different ways, to play out the Divine work (score) under the baton of the Principalities.

The Principalities are charged with overseeing groups of people and educating them in the ways of God. Their task is to watch over leaders and inspire them to do good works. Such leaders, called to positions of authority and influence over others, are not to do so in order to take power of their own gain and benefit. They are to do so for the love and honour of God and for the common good.

As educators, Principalities are to encourage people to pray and practice spiritual disciplines that will help them grow closer to God. This includes inspiring people through the Arts and Sciences.

Meditation

Offer your spiritual life and your Lenten disciplines to God for blessing

What are the gifts and talents that God has given us? Thank God for them.

Do we practice and enjoy them?

What stops us from using them?

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.