



The Angels

Messengers from a loving God



St Faustina a chosen soul of God
Our duties towards holy angels
The year of faith
Prophet for a crisis
Angels in Genesis



God, who is love, can use the angels to do things for Him and they bring the Good News. St Gabriel, a messenger of light, came to announce the birth of Jesus Christ Our Lord and Saviour. In heaven, we will be like angels in front of God and the Holy Spirit will be within us. We are His children and the angels are His servants.

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When we recite the salutations of the Chaplet of St Michael the Archangel, we invoke the whole nine Choirs of angels to come down from heaven and we should ask them for different things, calling on them often during the day.

The Bible does not reveal how many angels are assigned to an individual. The Early Fathers of the Church say that from the moment of conception each of us has a guardian angel by our side who is with us during and after death. They come to visit and console us in Purgatory.

The Catholic Church teaches us to have a close relationship with our guardian angel. We should treat them like close friends, as did the saints. Pray to your guardian angel, as well as to the guardian angel of those who are in sickness and unresolved situations, and they will help you.

St Michael the Archangel is a Knight and can be called an exorcist because he casts to hell all demons through divine power. According to Tradition and many saints he was also

the guardian angel of Jesus. He is mentioned in a solemn way only five times in the Bible. St Padre Pio often said ‘Thanks to St Michael, I won lots of battles in my life’.

The Gospel of St Luke reveals angels enjoying seeing the very first and the most important of God’s attributes, Divine Mercy. Everything depends on faith, so pray for the intercession of St Faustina for a deeper relationship with God and your guardian angel. St Faustina needed St Michael the Archangel and called on him often for help and assistance.

The true and real angels rejoice joyfully, pointing the way to God and help develop our virtues and spirituality.

I assure you of the constant daily prayer of the priests of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel for all our readers and their families. Please let others know about our magazine and help us to distribute it all over the world.

God bless you.

Father **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA

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Messengers from a loving God

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■ St Faustina and her confessor, Blessed Father Michael Sopoćko

St Faustina, a chosen soul of God

I knew that Sister Faustina was an extraordinary person and a chosen soul of God from the very first moment we met. As a postulant, I was tormented by thoughts to abandon the congregation and my calling. I worked closely with Sister Faustina and told her about my problem. She was genuinely worried and told me that if I succumbed to the temptation I would be damned forever.

Her eyes could read my soul

Her keen eyes could read my soul: she knew about my sins and falls. She would often tell me what sin I had committed and I know she suffered

greatly because I dared to offend Jesus. She would often say that nothing hurt Jesus more than distrust; and that even if my sins were like scarlet, I must never doubt that God would forgive me. It was the very moment to trust Him like a child, to go to His feet and leave our sins there. She also said that if a soul was afraid to approach Jesus after a sin, then it hurt the Lord in the very core of His Heart. Christ was hurt more by our distrust than by the most serious of sins. She used to say: “It is very human to fall because of weakness, but it is satanic to stay in the sin and yield to distrust.”

I remember that there was a priest who lived and worked in our congregation. Sister Faustina often asked me to pray for him as his soul was in terrible condition. She was brave

enough to tell him that. She was merciless for sins; she would take a person aside and admonish them.

Importance of confession

She always told our pupils that although they had received Holy Communion if they did not confess they therefore stayed in mortal sin. They could not understand how she knew their spiritual life but Sister Faustina knew which soul was God's chosen one from the first moment and would say it aloud. In a supernatural way she knew if someone was dying in mortal sin and asked us to pray for Divine Mercy for that soul. She would ▶

► cry because she was full of regret for that soul. The time of day was not important; she would stop her meal or a conversation to pray for poor souls.

I remember that Sister Faustina told me that she begged God to take the sense of taste away from her. God heard her request and from that moment she did not know the taste of food. She had liked chocolate very much but it now tasted like brown bread.

Obedience and humility

I adored her obedience and humility. For example, once there was a play in our congregation in Vilnius. Everybody went to see it; only Sister Faustina remained kneeling at the tabernacle in prayer. Father Andrasz said to her "Go and play" and out of obedience she immediately disappeared from the chapel. Whilst a novitiate, she interceded for another novice who did something wrong. Mistress Jozefa was so angry that she expelled her from the novitiate for a couple of days. Sister Faustina suffered in silence and with humility. She did not complain about the injustice.



■ Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy, Cracow-Łagiewniki, Poland

Her words were prophetic

When she was leaving the house in Derdy she told me in secret that she was going to die in the autumn in two years time and that we would not see each other again on earth but in heaven. She asked me not to tell anyone about this while she was alive. Her words were prophetic. Our conversation took place in May 1936; she died in October 1938. When we said goodbye she spoke a lot about my soul. I asked her to give me a souvenir. She looked up to heaven and gave me the cross she always carried in her pocket. I knew it was of great importance to her as it was from Jerusalem and Father Sopoćko, her spiritual master and father, gave it to her. She also promised to pray for me in a special manner after her death. I still feel her care over me.

I loved her very much on earth and now I love her even more.

By Sister **M. Justyna Golofit**
 Congregation of the Sisters
 of Our Lady of Mercy
 Warsaw, 9th December, 1955
 Taken from "Oredzie Miłosierdzia"



In the last issue Susie describes her glamorous life giving away everything material, her conversion to the Catholic faith and total surrender to God.

It is a soft Irish morning and the change of season can be felt in the misty September air. Here in Ballintubber, County Mayo, looking at the beautiful abbey in the early morning light I think back with gratitude to that early autumn several years ago now when I felt drawn to make that fateful pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi which changed my life forever. It is now six years since I was there and where I experienced the voice of the Lord calling me as He once called St Francis, into His service. God's goodness never fails to astound me. But then, if we really think about it, His love for each one of us is so awesome, we can never fully comprehend it...

Solitude and silence

Love is the reason I'm here, alone in my hermitage, with no TV or mod cons, living a very simple life of prayer. "A condition of complete simplicity, costing not less than everything" as

Touched by Amazing Grace

(Part 4)

TS Elliot wrote. But then an extrovert like me needs solitude and silence to enter fully into relationship with our loving God and to allow God's light to permeate the depths of my being. To me, this is the one thing necessary to love God with all my heart and soul, and live in communion with my neighbour and all of His creation, so actually living this life fills my soul with joy and thanksgiving. Solitude is not something to enter into lightly though for any extended length of time. The Desert Fathers knew this well. St Anthony who lived as hermit in the silence of the desert had to wrestle with demons; these demons are often the passions and selfish desires of the ego that rise up from within your own soul. You cannot point the finger of blame for your faults at someone else when you live a life of solitude, and the Lord may make you acutely aware of the very faults you have been trying to conceal in that way in the past. Sometimes people wonder how one can exist without newspapers & TV. What do you do they say? The answer is simple, I pray: daily Mass in the abbey, the prayer of the Church from the breviary five times a day, lectio divina, adoration and writing icons which are essentially works of prayer. There is a prayer in every single brush stroke! Then there are the icon retreats, and Taize prayer sessions with adoration in the abbey. And the Lord has also given me other work to do! St Anthony and St Francis both sought a life of solitude, but people went in search of them. People

who were in need of hope, who wanted the peace that only a living relationship with Christ can bring. And gradually more people are coming to Ballintubber, pilgrims on a journey.

Humility

But before you think I am some sort of saint living this life, I am not.

In fact as St Francis would say I am just "a useless servant". That does not mean it is not my deepest desire to aspire to holiness. Indeed the Holy Father's words so frequently remind each one of us of our call to holiness, in our various vocations in life whether married, single or consecrated. St Francis was so aware of this too, and it is I feel, a reason for the continuing devotion for this saint who chose to walk humbly ▶



■ Workshops in writing icons

- in the footprints of Jesus his Brother. This too is my aspiration, but always keeping in mind St Francis' example of humility. It is said that when St Francis died and was taken to heaven, his humility was rewarded by God. St Francis was given a beautiful throne to sit on, it had once belonged to Lucifer, who had been cast out of heaven by St Michael for his pride and for desiring to usurp God's sovereignty.

Heaven touches earth

It will be difficult to tell of all the amazing "God incidences" that have come about just this summer alone, and all the little miracles the Lord has brought about. Lives transformed, faith renewed for pilgrims coming to this holy place. For me Ballintubber is a "thin" place where heaven touches earth, and Church Island where I lead the Icon Retreats is an oasis of peace. It



■ Blessing of the icon and its creator



■ Participants of the workshops

is the place where St Finian Cam built his monastery, where hermit monks worked on illuminated manuscripts for the abbey, and now the place where modern pilgrims learn the sacred art of iconography, and rediscover that inner peace that the world cannot give. The retreats this year were truly blessed, each person finished their own beautiful icon; people came from all walks of life: nuns, homemakers, solicitors, and farmers. The moment when each participant presented their icon before Fr Fahey for blessing with holy chrism at the closing Mass was a profoundly moving occasion of thanksgiving. The work of their hands was blessed and set apart for prayer, and the retreatants too received a blessing through their work and prayer during their week on that mystical little island. Already people are asking to take part in the Icon Retreats on Church Island next year!

Beautiful icons

We often forget the words of St Paul: "*We are God's work of art.*" (Ephesians 2:9). Writing or painting icons is just one aspect of my work for

the Lord, I see the people who come to the hermitage door as potentially beautiful icons - made in the image of God, to love Him and reflect His light and love to others. Sadly life can cause a lot of pain and hurt which obscures that beauty. So often they need to learn to grow in their relationship with Jesus and to trust Him. Jesus' words to St Faustina: "Jesus, I trust in you", can be such a simple and powerful prayer in that healing process! The hermitage provides a place where people can tell their story and where with prayer and love God can bring about healing. The little guest hermitage provides a little oasis of peace for pilgrims to explore and develop their relationship with God on private retreats. Often friars or sisters will ask to come and spend time apart with the Lord here, and young people too are hungry for the chance to deepen their relationship with Jesus here. Everything is taken care of for retreatants so that they can find the spiritual refreshment they need, guests are treated as one would treat Christ, and they are within a stone's throw of the abbey and the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel there.

Desire in people's hearts

It seems that each day the Lord brings fresh opportunities to reawaken the faith here in the west of Ireland. Post-Celtic Tiger, there is a real desire growing in people's hearts for that genuine "fullness of life" (Jn10:10) that only God can give. There is so much need and so much work to be done, but I have only one pair of hands, and limited resources. So I asked the Lord for help and gradually good hearted people who love the Lord too are coming forward to lend a hand in this work, to build up the Church, the body of Christ, through work and prayer, *labora et ora*, to help with retreats or around the hermitage. I am blessed too, to have the prayer support of the Carmelite sisters at Knock, and friars around the world who I worked with in the past. Prayer is such a gift, it bears one up when life is hard, and this life is not without its problems and hardships, as it is for everyone when you wholeheartedly choose to follow the Lord. We all need each others prayers so much! Perhaps it is the centuries of prayer that attracts people to the hallowed ground of Ballintubber Abbey and the ancient pilgrim Tochar to Croagh Patrick. The signs of new growth and renewal are encouraging; the future is entirely in the Lord's hands, I am just a "useless servant" ready to do the Lord's bidding, in obedience to His Church.

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Our duties towards the Holy Angels



St Bernard, a devotee of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was also a great eulogist of the Holy Angels. He wished to say to each person, and especially to children, that they have their own guardian angel and they should never forget their ever present companion throughout life, and, that we should "honour his presence, kindness, trust and have gratitude for taking good care of us". Our guardian angel loves, assists, respects, protects and guards each of us every moment. St Bernard asks us to respond to the goodness of the holy angels:

"To honour his presence". We should remember our guardian angel, this heavenly prince, and he shall never be ashamed of us. St Bernard added: "Do not do

anything in the presence of the angels what you have never done in my presence. Dear children, you shall never do anything which might offend your guardian angel. Do not do anything which you would never do in the presence of the Pope, your mother and father".

"To do honour for his kindness". Our guardian angel not only loves us truly but also is tenderly devoted to us with all his heart. He continually surrounds us with his love and kindness. Should we not reciprocate his attitude toward us? We may do it by daily prayers, by calling him in the morning and in the evening as well as in the course of everyday events.

"Gratitude for his good care". The cognizance of the fact that we are guarded by a prince of the Heavenly Court, by one of the chosen spirits, of which the Lord said they have always seen His Majesty in the splendour of paradise, and should raise our respect and complete trust. That trust has nothing to do with human pride; it is crucial when the task we are to do seems extremely difficult. In such moments we should put our trust in angelic help and care. The more we experience their protection, the more we should pray spontaneously.

Once again, expressing our fatherly care, we strongly advise all Catholic children to love and pray to their guardian angels.

Pope Pius XI to the children
2nd September, 1938

An interview with Alan Napleton Founder and director of Catholic Marketing Network

The Catholic Marketing Network provides a valuable resource to the Catholic retailing community. In 1996, Alan founded the Catholic Marketing Network which has brought the diverse areas of Catholic book publishing and gift retailing together in the hope of furthering the goals and is now the main co-ordinator for 'The Angels – messengers from a loving God' magazine in America and Canada.

How did you come across The Angels magazine?

I came across a copy in the vestibule of my parish church. There are always materials placed there and with my interest in angels, The Angels magazine caught my immediate attention.

Have you always had an interest in angels?

Yes, ever since I was a young boy I had a keen interest in the supernatural and a curiosity concerning the spirit world. When we would recite the part of the Creed at Mass that states we believe "in all that is seen and unseen" I would also think about that unseen world and throughout my life the contemplation of this "unseen" world and angels held a high interest for me.

Why did you want to become a helper and co-ordinator of The Angels magazine?

I had an occurrence with my own guardian angel when I was a young

boy that brought the reality of my own angel into a very clear focus. Although I have had some ups and downs in my own spiritual walk, recently I have found myself developing a closer relationship with my own guardian angel and that deepening relationship has enriched both my temporal and spiritual life. I'd like others to deepen their relationship with their angels and to have a better understanding of these spiritual beings. Hopefully my work with The Angels magazine with help accomplish this.

How do you think we could better inform people about our guardian angel and the holy angels?

Certainly The Angel magazine is an excellent tool in this regard. It is filled with excellent articles concerning the holy angels enabling the reader to gain a better knowledge and understanding of their spiritual companion and the spiritual world in general.

Today, more people are receiving more of their information through new media technologies like the internet and these means of communications should also be utilized. The internet is an excellent way for individuals to share experiences concerning their angels and this could encourage more discussion and interest in angels.

New Age thinking has an important focus on angels, how do you think The Angel magazine might help to correct some of those views, and also not be seen as part of that movement?

The New Age Movement is filled with dangerous lies and what it teaches about angels is fraught with untruths. I think the New Age Movement holds interest for some people because it deals with the spirit world and most people realize that they are more than just flesh and bones. Although they may not realize, each of us has an eternal soul,



and they have an interest in the spiritual side of their existence and the dangerous untruths of the New Age Movement satisfies this interest at a very basic level.

In stark contrast, The Angel magazine is a beautiful publication that is full of the Catholic Church's teachings concerning angels and the spiritual world and explains the proper role of angels in our lives.

The Angels magazine at times portrays some of the more difficult areas of the Catholic Faith, for example, it mentions sin, the Devil, temptation and also evil spirits; as well as the more uplifting areas such as God's and Jesus' love for every human being. How do you think those people in the US that might read the magazine will react to these different messages?

These "difficult" areas of our Catholic Faith are truths; they're absolutes. The Devil is real whether you believe in him or not, as are God's immutable truths. Sin and its consequences are real. I believe that a better understanding of these truths can provide great comfort to so many people who are experiencing challenges and pain in their lives. Understanding that sin is what brings pain and discord into the world offers

an opportunity for each of us to experience great joy by living according to God's precepts, avoiding sin and opening our lives to His grace.

What are the important messages that you hope readers of The Angels magazine will get from reading it?

With so many people experiencing loneliness and depression of some sort, an understanding of the total and unconditional love Jesus has for each one of us can be life changing. The Angels magazine is a wonderful way for people to understand the gift of our angels and this understanding can help bring us closer to God.

The Catholic Church is going through some very difficult times at the moment in many countries, how do you think The Angels magazine might help to overcome those difficulties and help the Church continue to be accepted and develop, particularly in the US?

I am a person who sees the glass as "half full, not half empty" and although the Catholic Church is experiencing many difficulties I see many signs of the New Evangelization taking hold and producing abundant fruit.

Difficulties occur when untruths prevail and all of what ails the world is based on lies. Jesus Christ is truth itself and it is through His truths that healing comes about. The Angels magazine, by explaining these truths concerning angels and the spirit world provides a great service to the Church. These explanations can help us overcome some of the difficulties we are currently experiencing in our lives.

Catholic retailing must be difficult at times. How do you overcome

these difficulties? Does your faith play a great part?

Catholic book and gift stores provide a great service to the Church. They are truly "outposts of evangelization" providing the resources of our faith to a countless number of souls. However, operating these stores is a real challenge and most stores struggle financially, so the strong faith of the individual store owners plays a huge part in their efforts to keep their stores open.

Catholic bookstores and suppliers are involved in the important work of spreading the Gospel. Do you find this gives them many opportunities to help and give good advice to people?

Yes, most store owners and suppliers of religious books and articles are very well catechised. They have a deep desire to help people in their spiritual lives and often spend much time discussing the faith with their customers while also providing them with Catholic resources aimed at their particular needs.

Is there one key message that you hope readers of The Angels magazine take from reading it?

That we have an eternal soul and like angels we are eternal beings. By helping readers better understand the world of angels they can better understand their rightful eternal destiny, which for all of us is heaven. The Angels magazine is an excellent tool in helping us understand that the Holy Angels are a gift from God and that they want to and can help us reach that destiny.

Thank you Alan for the interview.

Interview by **Noreen Bavister**
Deputy Editor

Angels in Genesis (Part 2)

In the previous issue Father Patrick's article started in the beautiful, ancient city of Rome. His daily view of the dome of St. Peter's Basilica was framed by the umbrella pines of the seminary grounds of the Pontifical North American College. In the midst of this magnificence, he was suffering the deepest psychological trial of his life.

He had completely lost a sense of focus and direction. It was more than a "vocation crisis" and leaving the seminary, rather it was a fundamental angst that caused him to wonder about the value of life itself.

Dogmatic Tradition

Traditional Roman Catholic theology has spilled much ink on the subject of angels. The problem has been that theological interest in angels has been much more dogmatic than biblical. Much attention has been devoted to the study of angelic names and structures, to the nature of angels in themselves, and to the relationships of the angels among themselves. It is interesting to note that the biblical focus on angels is always centred on their function in God's plan and not on the angels themselves.

There is much to be gained in Roman Catholic theology by reclaiming biblical evidence and biblical faith concerning the messengers that God sends to people of faith.

In Genesis the stories nowhere necessitate that angels be pure spirits or even divine creatures disguised as humans. For example, in no instance

does it suggest that these messengers need wings to overcome some spatial gap between humans and God. In the Genesis stories God seems to have worked through humans; and yet these messengers were still recognised as divine. The Genesis stories had not been victimised by the later development of Manichaeism: the idea that the flesh is bad, or evil, or an unfit vehicle for God's work, which would necessitate a more perfect (bodiless) creature. Historically there has been much speculation on questions such as when and how the angels were created: Their relation to human beings; whether an angel is free; the names and ranks of angels; and whether an angel is "born" for a certain task and then ceases to exist when the task is completed.

The idea of a hierarchical structure of the angelic host is a much later development as was the concept of angels as pure spirits. Both ideas are products of a dualistic cosmology and are more philosophical than biblical. Also, these ideas are not only not Semitic but are Neo-Platonic intrusions that cannot be substantiated by historical-critical exegesis. Part of the confusion about the nature of angels comes from the inability of the Greek word *αγγελοί* to render the Hebrew word *mal'ak*, for historically, the two became identical.

Christian thought became increasingly affected by Greek thought. As Christianity moved into the Middle Ages, philosophical constructs and dogmatic definitions became more important than biblical concepts. While the passage in Gen. 6:4 (where the angels fathered giants by human mothers) kept the Church Fathers from admitting a purely spiritual nature for angels, the passage in Gen. 21:17 (the *mal'ak* of Elohim calls to Hagar that "Elohim has heard"), functioned to support the idea of angels as pure spirits. On the one hand, some authors maintained that the angelic world existed from all eternity; while on the other hand, many commentators failed to notice that the wingless *mal'ak* (Gen. 28:10) uses a ladder.

Finally, in the thirteenth century, Roman Catholic teaching on angels was formally defined. Angels were taught to be incorporeal substances that were pure spirit, essentially immortal and in possession of intellect and free will. The definitive teaching (to which all subsequent teaching reverted) was pronounced by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). The Council stated: "We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God.... who by His omnipotent power, from the beginning of time, created in the same way,



both orders of creation, spiritual and corporeal, that is, the angelic order and the earthly order” (DZ 800). Even with these pronouncements nothing can be found in the book of Genesis that necessitates angels to be pure spirits. In fact, on the contrary, angels are depicted as concrete realizations of the sacred and, in so being, need not be pure spirit (even though disguised as human).

Function of Mediation

Immanence and transcendence are real attributes of God. Angels are

not peripheral if they function (as they do in the Scriptures) to bridge the gap between immanence and transcendence, i.e., to make the divine visible in structures that this world understands. Angels do symbolize the inaccessible mystery of God, yet they also function to vividly and concretely implement not simply the idea, but the action and presence of God in history. Not only is it not necessary that angels be pure spirit to exercise their function in God’s plan, there is little hope of angels making holiness present to history or the sacred present to the secular if they remain pure spirits. God’s messengers are ways to make observable to the eyes of faith, as well as to the eyes of the human

person, God’s work in history and interest in human life. Through real messengers (and not pure spirits), a concerned God makes known His Divine will and redemptive purpose in visible and audible phenomena. These messengers function to assist the believer the perceiving God’s presence and protection, while at the same time accepting the challenge of being a trusting believer who is led by faith and not simply by (human) sight. God touches human hearts and human history at crucial times. This is seen clearly in the history of Israel in general and in the stories in Genesis in particular, when the angel of God appears on the scene. Angels are never simply “there”; they appear for a specific reason, e.g. they arrive at or announce significant turning points in a person’s life. At no place in the Bible is a person prepared in advance for the visit of an angel. The individual’s world is pierced by the Divine at a moment that is unexpected. Whatever the occasion for the angelic visit, the angel of God leaves the situation, and more importantly the visited person is altered. The message may be a challenge to go in another direction. The angel may bring a warning of danger or a message of consolation. The angel may bear a divine promise or confer a new name. In each situation the angel impacts and affects the circumstances so that the divine presence is made known in such a way that those involved will indeed come to believe that “God has visited His people”.

Conclusion

My faith provides me with convictions about God’s love and involvement in the lives of those about ▶

whom God cares, and my belief that God does communicate through messengers, enables me to firmly believe that my seminary friend John was an angel. Though my time with him was brief, this incident and a number of other significant and similar events bring me to the conviction that God still does send messengers; God does still, in our day, send angels. John, I am sure, was unaware of his divine service; but a person of faith would admit that God can work through a human without his or her knowledge as such. The truth is that whatever vehicle God uses (music, art, human emotions, etc.) can be called a messenger of God. But biblical evidence, especially in the book of Genesis, shows a preference of God using humans as messengers. In his comedy-parody of Noah and the ark, comedian Bill Cosby depicts Noah asking God to perform a miracle. Noah has made a wrong choice, and asks God to miraculously change the sex of one of the animals so that there will be a male and female, as had been previously commanded. God promptly responds to the request:

“Come on, Noah, you know I don’t work like that!” God omnipotent chooses to reveal Himself as God wills. God does not need to choose the miraculous, nor even a recognisably religious context to make the divine presence known. Surely the existence of angels is not necessary, but biblical accounts attest to the fact that God has chosen to use messengers; God has chosen to use angels. The people of Genesis, and of the whole Bible, were subject to the same laws of nature that affect us. The laws of nature were not suspended each time God decided to communicate with the people He created.

In a real way, it can be said that theology and angelology function in the same sphere. Both revert to the reality that the sacred cannot be proven. The human imagination and ability to conceptualize are limited. Religious experience is not subject to scientific proof. The experience of a divine messenger - of an angel - and the experience of God can only be described, indicated and recounted, but not objectively verified. This is the story of Scripture, of Abraham, of Hagar, of Jacob, and many others. Angels function in the sacred history of Israel to show that the Kingdom of God and the sphere of the sacred pierce human existence and touches human experience. Angels function in human history in such a way that one may experience the helping hand of God as in the experience of the hand of a helpful neighbour. Angels bridge the gap between the human and divine by rendering the distant God near. Angels, while preserving the mystery of God’s presence and action also reject a non-biblical pantheism. These messengers manifest God’s presence in the world while maintaining his distinction (not distance) from human history and experience.

These thoughts about angels leave us with many challenges. A few of them might be: if God can use humans, how do we predispose ourselves to be God’s messengers (with or without our knowledge of it)? How do we preserve the rich biblical spirituality of angels that protects the uniqueness of the Hebrew concept of a God who sends angels? How can we be open to the angels in our lives? How do we respond to the messages, challenges and changes announced by the messengers that the Lord sends to us?

To narrow the concept, function, or appearance of angels is to limit God, which is a very haughty, if not dangerous, enterprise. The people of the Old Testament in general, and the people of Genesis in particular, had an expectancy that God might work in their lives through angels. In light of these reflections, without hesitation or doubt, I believe that God works in human lives through angels; that God has worked and continues to work in my life through angels. Often these angels visit in the flesh and blood persons we encounter every day, and often in ways we least expect. What would be more appropriate for a God of the Incarnation? Maybe an introduction to this expectancy, this biblical belief that God just might work through other human beings, is found in the injunction of Jesus that reminds us that whatever we do to the least of the little ones, we do to God. The secular is imbued with the sacred in many ways, not the least of which is the presence of the angels of God. I was unaware that John was an angel sent by God because he did not fit the image I had previously conceived an angel to be. The Bible tells us time and again, the awareness of God’s presence in one’s life and not the manner of God’s presence is what is important. Expectancy of and hope for a visit from the Divine is the mark of every true believer. May we who believe live in hope. May we be open to God’s visits. May we welcome in God’s name, to all our sisters and brothers, for in doing so we may be entertaining angels unawares.

Father **Patrick Manning** Ph.D.
Chair Division of Theology
Walsh University, Ohio

The gift of life

*Sweet Jesus bless all mothers-to-be
this Christmas day and every day.
Bless all midwives who care for
mothers and their newborn infants.
the birth of a baby is a true miracle,
a gift of life.*

*Sweet Jesus thank you for our midwives,
nurses and doctors. We value their expertise,
hard work, dedication and care.
May the Holy Spirit help and guide their
professions to continue to do the best
for mothers-to-be and their unborn babies.
Bless all midwives who have the courage
to go the extra mile in fighting in defence
of the unborn child.*

*Sweet Jesus, bless and protect all new parents to be.
Give them great health, wisdom and good conscience.
May all expectant mothers be filled with many
graces and peace while caring the most
Precious gift of all, the gift of life.
Bless and protect the Glasgow Midwives
Mary Doogan and Connie Wood.*

Exodus 1: 15-22
Noreen Bavister

CSMA English speaking Pilgrimage to Italy 26th October – 2nd November 2013

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Email: holyangelsinfo@gmail.com

THE YEAR OF FAITH

**11th October 2012
– 24th November 2013**

The existence of angels – a truth of faith

328 The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition.

Who are they?

329 St. Augustine says: "Angel" is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit', from what they do, 'angel.'" With their whole beings the angels are servants and messengers of God. Because they "always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" they are the "mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word".

330 As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendour of their glory bears witness.

Taken from the Catechism
of the Catholic Church

Sister Faustina (Part 2) and her guardian angel

St Faustina actually saw an angel. In her Diary (419) St Faustina wrote about seeing her guardian angel. This raises the question, was this vision spiritual or natural?

Analysis of the passage 419 shows that it was a natural vision, which means that St Faustina actually saw an angel. But, can a purely invisible being be seen with the human eye? Theoretically

it is impossible for people to physically see angels. However, St Faustina managed to describe the spirit: “I immediately asked my guardian angel for help, and at once the bright and radiant figure of my guardian angel appeared. The faithful guardian angel accompanied me, in a visible manner, right to the very house. His look was modest and peaceful, and a flame of fire sparkled from his forehead” (**Diary 419**).

How can an angel become visible?

What does the greatest of all theologians, St Thomas Aquinas, say about the “bodies” of angels? He firmly states that “angels do not have bodies naturally united to them” (STh, O.51, a. 1). Nevertheless, angels may assume a human body so that people can see them. In the Book of Revelation, human-shaped angels led the prophet through visions and explained God’s will to him (Rev 21:22). Angels may become human-like so perfectly that it is difficult for people to notice the difference; for instance, St Peter experienced the presence of an angel

after he had been released from prison from prison (Acts 12, 5:17).

How can an angel become visible? St Thomas replies: “By divine power sensible bodies are so fashioned by angels as fittingly to represent the intelligible properties of an angel. And, this is what we mean by an angel assuming a body” (STh, O.51, a.2). The assumed body is not like a human one nor like the body of the Resurrected Christ. Jesus says that “A ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have” (Luke 24: 39).

According to St Thomas, angels make use of air to assume their bodies: “The angels assume this body of air, condensing it by divine power in so far as is needed for forming the assumed body” (STh, O. 51, a.2). It is just a temporary body required to do the task ordered by the Lord.

Artists depict angels as extremely beautiful young men of great strength. They usually have luxurious robes like the seven angels from the Book of Revelation “wearing pure white linen, fastened round their waists with belts of gold” (Rev 15:6). They also have wings and hold some attributes in their hands. St Faustina used few words when describing her guardian angel, she wrote only of “the bright and radiant figure.”



■ Sister Faustina as a young girl



■ The altar with St Faustina's tombstone, Poland

A reflection of God's glory

In contrast to evil spirits, whose presence St Faustina painfully experienced, her guardian angel was the reflection of God's glory. According to the Bible, the divine glory manifests itself as an extremely bright light. St Faustina's guardian angel reflected God's glory in the same way as the angel announcing the Nativity to the shepherds in Bethlehem: "An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around

them, and they were terrified" (Luke 2:9). It was the same glory which led the Chosen People through the desert: "To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire" (Ex 24:17). Moses' face radiated with God's glory after his meeting the Lord: "Moses was there with the Lord for forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And, he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant of the law in his hands, he was not aware that his

face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him" (Ex 34, 28:30).

Her humble guardian angel

Influenced by her humble guardian angel, St Faustina lost all sense of fear. She felt calm and her heart was filled with peace, courage and joy. She was ready to fulfill God's will. Each time she called her heavenly friend, he assisted her in a visible manner.

"A flame of fire sparkled from his forehead." The forehead is a symbol of thoughts and a thought is the beginning of an action. On our pilgrimage to the Heavenly Father we need to have clarity of mind. Our guardian angel seems to be the supernatural agent who helps us to distinguish between good and evil. Angels protect people entrusted to them by God. They lead them to God, the Eternal Good. St Thomas suggests that "the human intellect as the inferior one and is strengthened by the action of angelic intellect" (S.Th.O.11, art.1). On the other hand, many people may be also beguiled by the Devil who "is called the kindler of thoughts, inasmuch, as he incites by thought the desire for things, by way of persuasion, or by rousing the passions" (S.Th.O.111, art.2). St Faustina experienced many satanic attacks. However, she always managed to overcome these, protected by her guardian angel. May we model ourselves on her nowadays, in these times with so many false ideologies.

Father **Karol Dabrowski** CSMA



Interested in becoming a Knight of St Michael?

- **Monthly Eucharistic adoration and Reconciliation**
- **Daily bible reading**
- **Fast each Friday on bread and water (or a good deed if fast is impossible)**
- **Pray the chaplet after every Mass**
- **Daily exorcism prayer to St Michael**
- **Nine day Novena to St Michael before the feast day on 29th September**

The Knights of St Michael the Archangel is a movement overseen by the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel.

The official name of this apostolic movement is The Knights of Saint Michael the Archangel. The main task of the Knights is to proclaim the victory of Jesus Christ over Satan. The Knights are sent on a mission to expiate God for the sins of humankind and to obtain the conversion of sinners. They aim to achieve this by reciting the prayer of St Michael the Archangel to defend us in the day of battle (see back of magazine). This simple prayer of exorcism is said every day to keep away evil spirits from oneself, the Church and the whole world, particularly from those that are tempted and possessed by Satan. It is referred to in these set of the rules (Statutes) as the prayer of simple exorcism.

During the trial period of three months the candidate should follow all the rules (Statutes) which includes curtailing bad habits such as alcohol or smoking, eventually eliminating them completely if one can. It is perfectly in order to have a glass of wine with a meal.

We have people who have devotions for example to the Divine

Mercy and become members of the Knighthood after a trial period. Devotional prayers do not exclude anyone becoming a Knight of St Michael. Generally, those who belong to other apostolic movements are not admitted to the Knights of St Michael the Archangel because it would be difficult for them to fulfil all duties required by other religious groups they belong to. However, if one is determined and eager to become a member of the Knights, the National Animator can decide whether they should be admitted or not. If people are committed to other groups where a lot of personal time is taken up, one may not have enough time after work, family life and other duties to fulfil the basic requirements to become a Knight of St Michael.

For further information on the rules (Statutes) if you are interested in becoming a Knight of St Michael please contact me by letter or email redakcja.kjb@gmail.com.

Father **Piotr Prusakiewicz** CSMA
General Animator of the Knighthood
Congregation of St Michael the Archangel
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05-261 Marki, Warsaw
Poland

Prayer for the holy souls

Prayer to Our Lady of Montligeon

Our Lady Liberatrix have mercy on all our deceased loved ones especially those who are most in need of the Lord's mercy.

Intercede for those who have left us and may the purifying love of God lead them to full deliverance. May our prayer, united with the prayer of the whole Church, obtain for them joy beyond all their desires and bring consolation and relief to our loved ones in their suffering and distress.

Mother of the Church, help us, pilgrims on earth, to make of our lives a time for our interior liberation through our journey towards the Resurrection. Heal the wounds of the heart and soul. Help us to become the witnesses to the Invisible, seeking what the eye cannot see. Grant us the grace of becoming apostles of Hope, like watchmen awaiting the dawn.

Refuge of sinners and Queen of all saints, gather us all, one day, in our Father's House for the eternal Easter. Amen.

Our Lady of Montligeon, pray for our dear departed.



Under angelic wings



■ Michael just two hours before his lungs collapsed and he nearly died

I called my son Michael Joseph, after St Michael the Archangel and St Joseph. I have always prayed to St Michael the Archangel especially to give him strength and to protect him as St Michael the Archangel is his patron saint. I am proud of my children and love them very much. During the last two years I have really prayed to St Michael to bring my son Michael and daughter Lisa back to the faith. Both my children are wonderful and with good hearts.

The Lord sent an angel

My son nearly died when he was only a few hours old. I woke up knowing something terrible was happening and asked a nurse to go and check on him. He had just stopped breathing but the Lord sent an angel that night in the form of a specialist from Manchester and he saved his life. Since then I have always had a very strong connection with my son, I know sometimes how he feels before he says anything. I don't think I am anything special; most mothers

have this natural instinct with their children.

When Michael was very young he loved me to tell him about St Michael fighting for God in heaven and he loved to look at pictures of St Michael the Archangel with his sword drawn etc. He loved the idea that this angel was such a great warrior. Since my conversion I have prayed for my family to come back to the faith and feel the love for Jesus that he has for each one of us. I pray to St Michael to keep us all safe from evil.

A few weeks ago Michael said he wanted to have a tattoo, so far we have managed to persuade him not to have any tattoos. However, at the age of 27 he decided he wanted one and came to talk to me about it. I told him his Dad would be furious but as he was 27 there was nothing we could really do about it. We have a wonderful relationship and he will always come to me if there is something difficult he wants to talk about. We have always been able to talk about anything. Then he told me what he proposed to have done and I was amazed, as up to then I had no idea what kind of tattoo he was thinking about and he had never mentioned it. He showed me ▶

- ▶ a picture on his phone of the design he had made and it was a beautiful rugged cross with a cloth lying at the bottom with each of his grandparents names on and Mum and Dad but behind the cross were two wonderful wings!!!

St Michael's wings

I was secretly thrilled but even more so when he came back the following day and said he had asked the artist to make the wings bigger! Michael put the cross of Jesus and the wings of St Michael on his back. I was amazed because it is a wonderful piece of art. It is only half finished and has to have shading on it. It will be beautiful when complete. Maybe my son does not realise that he is witnessing to the Lord by having a wonderful cross.

I also believe St Michael will watch him even more closely now he has his "St Michael's wings". The feeling in my soul was that the Holy Spirit was at work very powerfully and I gave thanks to the Lord for this amazing answer to my prayers.

Michael was such a spiritual boy and an altar server and was always talking about Jesus and the little children or Jesus and the animals. He has grown into a good son with a great heart full of love, compassion and a great sense of loyalty to his family. He is very strong and has always been very athletic, playing rugby league for 8 years, football and athletics (he throws the javelin). He is also a black belt 2nd Dan at Taekwondo and represented England a few years ago in the USA.

I am writing this at 4.15pm just about an hour after I wrote the above and something else has just happened, which is amazing! I came upstairs after switching off

my computer and was thinking about what I had typed. Michael was downstairs in the front room watching TV and I wondered if he was going to have another tattoo. I also wondered if he would have a complete picture of St Michael and how great that would look on his arm! The thought just came into my head. It did make me smile.

That tattoo

My son came into my room as I was putting away clothes and said "Mum, where is the picture of St Michael I had when I was small?" I looked at him and said "I think I know where it is, why?" He said "I think I might have a tattoo of St Michael on my arm." - I just sat there in amazement and thought "Wow - what is happening here?"

I looked at Michael and just sat there smiling, because at that moment he was the little child who loved Jesus! I saw it for an instant and gave thanks to God! He asked me why was I smiling and said to him "You will not believe me but I was just thinking how great a full picture of St Michael would look on your arm." We both smiled together and it was another very precious moment - another great blessing from the Lord for both of us this time. I felt I needed to say to him that I always prayed to St Michael to protect and guide him, and that I was so happy he had chosen that tattoo. He was very quiet and thoughtful and I was so happy I had said how I felt and how the Holy Spirit was working in him. How The Lord works wonders for us all!

Teresa Anne Smith
Leyland, England



■ Michael, his mother Teresa and sister Lisa

Prophet for a crisis

My brother is an economist, he works in a bank. Apart from many other duties, he also sells loans. However, nowadays banks seem very careful in giving loans due to people's inability to pay them back. That was one of the important mechanisms that led to the worldwide economic crisis.



Amos was a simple-minded and honest farmer who cultivated sycamore trees. He worked hard for his living. He liked to observe the surrounding world and listen to stories. In times of prosperity God called him to prophesy a great crisis, which was not a result of a war or a natural disaster but people's carelessness and avarice. The rich lived comfortably with no reflection that they made the poor suffer from the consequences of their own greediness.

The poor had to take bank loans and live on credit to survive. They become bank slaves. In many cases they had to sell their properties to pay loans off whereas the rich, blind to social injustice, enjoyed their luxurious life. God did not like it at all; that was why He sent Amos to make people aware of their wrongdoings. The Lord warned them: "For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals" (The Book of Amos 2:6). The same situation occurs nowadays.

Amos is the first prophet who passes God's words against the

Chosen People. Later Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel wrote in a similar manner. From the third chapter a few of Amos' books begin with "Listen!" It is as if he had to scream violently to urge people to repentance. Amos says that "The days are coming when I will send a famine through the land – not a famine of food or a thirst of water, but a famine of hearing the words of



the Lord" (Amos 8:11). The nation will not receive a prophet and will be lost from sea to sea, from north to south, looking for the Word of God. We may see it in Europe. Those, who wish to hear God have difficulties in finding priests and prophets.

God warns us that we will be lost if we focus on consumption, earning and buying material goods. We will not be able to notice beautiful and high values because it requires from us to stop and start thinking. We often confess sins but seldom consider what had happened before we decided to choose a wrong way. Maybe we had forgotten about our family and friends before we plunged ourselves into the vortex of wealth and material possessions.

The pursuit of profit without considering social justice could destroy our care of other people. This can be seen as the core of economic crises. God tells us that the more we think of money, the less we think of people. There is less time for spiritual life as well as less answers for God's calling. Therefore, economic crises can also be called an "ethical" one for it was human greed and not thinking about others that can easily lead to economic collapse.

Amos left a message that there was no social justice without faith.

Father **Grzegorz Sprysak** CSMA

The Mystical Nativity by Sandro Botticelli

Among the many paintings of the Divine Nativity, the painting by Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510) seems quite mysterious. “The Mystical Nativity” (painted in 1501, 108.5x75cm, tempera canvas, now in the National Gallery in London, UK) does not resemble other Renaissance paintings enriched with realistic elements, portraits and perspective space. Botticelli purposely created a surprisingly old-fashioned medieval picture of decorative Gothic atmosphere.

The artist, who had become familiar with Florentine humanists and the Renaissance court of Lorenzo de Medici, changed his thinking under the influence of Fra Gerolamo Savonarola, a fanatical Dominican. The preacher fervently criticized the general fall in morals, the cult of pagan ancient times and secularization of the arts. He applied the idea of the Apocalypse to the internal riots and wars in Florence at that time, as well as prophesying disasters in Italy before the revival of the Church and the coming of the New Jerusalem. Although he gained numerous supporters, his prophecies did not come true.

In the painting by Botticelli the Nativity is connected with allusions to the Apocalypse inspired by Savonarola. Nowadays, it is difficult to notice them but the Greek inscription at the top clearly reminds us of them.

The scene of the adoration of the Infant Jesus is in the centre of the canvas. Jesus, lying on a white wrap, is raising His hands to his Mother. Mary is kneeling with her head inclined and hands folded – this position was taken from visions by St

Brigid (1303 – 1373), which influenced the arts since the end of 14th century.

On the left there is St Joseph, thoughtful and trying to understand the mystery of virginal conception. The triangle of the composition is completed by a donkey and an ox. The animals were interpreted by the Fathers of the Church as symbols of unreasoning instincts in man as well as nature.

The adoration takes place under a thatched roof of a crib joined with a grotto. The Bible does not mention such a combination. The grotto is a symbol of the Mother's womb and the depths of the earth. God is descending to the darkness of the earth enlightening it with His Nativity, which transforms the whole universe. A grotto as a place of Jesus' birth developed in the iconography of the Eastern Church whereas a crib became popular in the West.

Symmetrically, on both sides of the grotto there are two groups of people led by angels holding olive branches. The group on the left may be shepherds and on the right – three figures – perhaps the Magi.

On the roof there are three angels kneeling and announcing God's glory. Their white, green and red robes symbolize faith, hope and love. In the sky above the crib there are angels dancing in the golden glory. They are holding olive branches with crowns and ribbons with inscriptions “Gloria in Excelsis Deo” hanging down. The angels are like the twelve stars in the crown of the apocalyptic Woman – the Mother of God. (Rev 12:1)

On the grass there are three double groups: angels and men, who are crowned with olive branches and holding ribbons with effaced inscriptions “*In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*”, are hugging one another as a sign of mutual peace. Small grotesque figures of demons are flashing through them in order to hide in rock clefts.

Olive branches symbolize divine love, reconciliation and peace, olive wreaths suggest those who have won over evil; the wreaths are rewards and a sign of inner transformation. The angels assisting God in the Nativity help us open up to holy reality, they adore and praise God, they announce the Good News, joy and peace (Luke



2, 8:14). Slender blonde-haired figures with bird-like wings are wearing similar robes. It is difficult to identify their sex or individual features. They are representatives of all pure spiritual beings and divine love on earth. They are active, which is seen by the arched curves of their bodies and soft round lines separating elements of warm colours. The linear perspective has been disproportioned for the Holy Family, who seem larger than the angels and other people. It is as if the artist wanted to emphasise equality of men and angels as well as to suggest the importance of the Infant Jesus, His Mother and St Joseph.

The painting does not illustrate the Gospel. Botticelli really believed in Savonarola's prophecies of a New Jerusalem, good and peace which will triumph soon. He does not make the message blurred by realism; it seems that Botticelli simplifies the painting purposely. The composition has a clear and universal character. God is to be born in each human soul. When man opens up to the Divine Mystery, one gains inner peace. Human nature and all creatures have the chance to become totally new – now and at the end of times.

Zaneta Groborz-Mazanek

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Secrets full of tears

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him. So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi (Matthew 2, 13:16).

Each time we read this passage of the Gospel, we may ask: If God sent an angel to Joseph to warn him of impending danger, why did He not warn the other fathers so that they could protect their children?

Lots of little boys were killed that night in Bethlehem. It was a painful ordeal for their parents and siblings. Each family mourned and although God knew this He still allowed the tragedy to occur. That tragic bloody night in Bethlehem was full of tears but it was also the night, during which the saints were born. We know without doubt that those boys became saints in heaven, the feast of the Holy Innocents' Day is celebrated on 28th December.

Suffering, particularly of innocent children is a mystery. We need to believe that God fulfils His great work through it. Difficult situations that our families experience are also a divine mystery. Everything is in the hands of the merciful and loving God.

God knows. God sees. God hears. We should trust Him in the very moment of our helplessness. God always draws goodness from any harsh situation.

Another mystery of the story is the cruelty and lack of respect for life, which seems a common issue today. It has been estimated that TV audiences watch the death of several hundreds of people on TV channels weekly. Whereas there are merely three or four pieces of information about the conception of a child or of a happy delivery given on news bulletins during the same period. This disproportion speaks for itself. There are numerous atrocities displayed or reported in the media which leads to the desensitization of the population.

If we want to be sensitive to the unborn, we need to have respect for each human life. If we wish to have a sensitive conscience, we need to turn the TV off when aggression is shown there. Such images stay in our memory and hearts.

Herod is an example of ill will. Satan and his evil companions make use of people's lack of sensitivity to destroy their high values. Each time there is something of high moral value and worthy of sacrifice shown, Satan always wants to turn it towards destruction. No wonder that when a child is born, evil is close by it. Satan knows that people's high moral values are worth more than all the treasures of the world. Truth, justice, marriage, love of children etc., these are the values Satan hates and wants them to vanish from human hearts.

The phrase 'Deliver us from evil' is not a coincidence in the prayer "Our Father".

Father Edward Staniek



■ Jacopo Bassano, *Flight Into Egypt*, 1538

Hymn to St Michael The Archangel

(Tune daily, daily sing to Mary)

*There's a shrine in Monte Sant Angelo, shining bright for all to see.
Glorious statue of St Michael there awaiting you and me.
In his face there's peace and courage, shield held high with eyes that plead:
"Stand with me, yes stand with me, I'll give you strength to follow thee".*

**R: Great St Michael, great St Michael your dear Knight I wish to be.
Let me give oh great St Michael, let me give my heart to thee.**

*In his arms you'll find his power, in his arms you'll find his peace.
Our Lord's guardian our St Michael, his protection is our bliss.
For whoever asks assistance, shall be heard without a miss.
Call on him my dearest pilgrims, call on him, Oh call on him.*

R: Great St Michael, great St Michael...

*When this world is in a turmoil, how can we forget our fear?
Turn our thoughts to great St Michael, who awaits so very near.
Let us think of Monte Sant Angelo, listen to St Michael's plea;
Call on me my dearest pilgrims, call on me, Oh call on me'.*

R: Great St Michael, great St Michael...

*We should think of being a Knight of great St Michael here today,
We have now been invited, to join forces and to pray.
Our Almighty will be joyous, if we save so many souls.
Oh! St Michael be beside me, give me strength to follow thee.*

R: Great St Michael, great St Michael...

Words by **Noreen Bavister**, UK

Principalities

Purity of intention is the virtue ascribed to Principalities. In their high functions they never seek but honour the interest of God alone. (Part 6)

In the thirteenth century, Roman Catholic teaching on angels was formally defined. Angels were taught to be incorporeal substances that were pure spirit, essentially immortal and in possession of intellect and free will. The definitive teaching was pronounced by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).

The lower hierarchy and the closest to mankind is composed of Principalities, Archangels and Angels. Principalities have been assigned the care and rule over the universe, they are the guardians of all earthly kingdoms; watching over nations, provinces, dioceses, religious communities, and, to avert them from the effects of divine wrath. Therefore, every kingdom and every person on earth has its own guardian angel.

Principalities influence hearts

Principalities teach people to honour their rulers and influence the hearts of rulers to use their power worthily for the glory of God and the good of their subjects; guiding events under God's direction for the benefit of a country or district committed to their care.

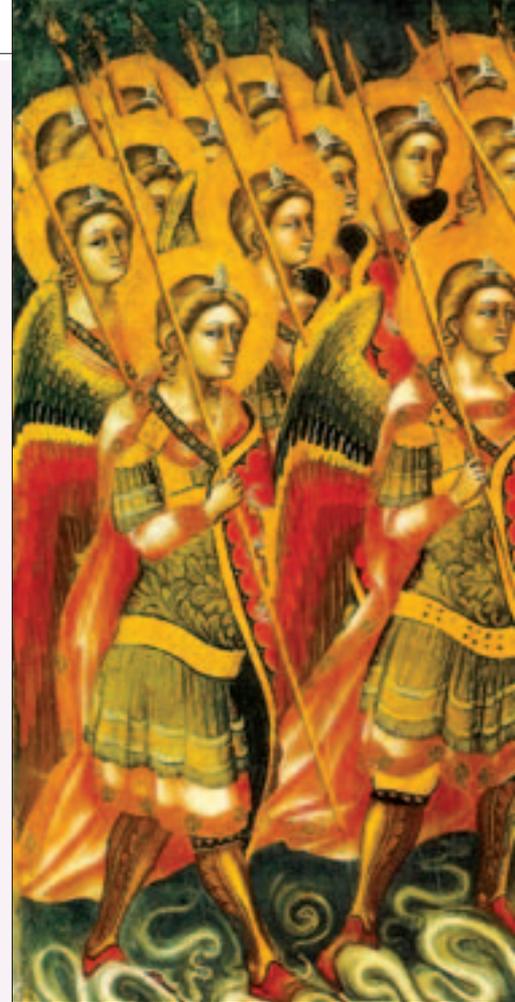
All these holy angelic ranks live one common life, helping one another in the sacred and joyous process of attaining greater and greater knowledge of God, of becoming more and more like Him.

The disciple of the great Apostle Paul, Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, to whom the Lord revealed the entire angelic world, writes: "The heavenly hierarchy is established in such a way that the lesser spiritual beings receive enlightenment from the higher ones, and represent for each other a ladder of ascension to supreme perfection."

Only the Lord God can say what the orders of importance the angels take. The Seraphim, Cherubim and Archangels are identified in the Bible with such detail that we can reliably know some of their characteristics and duties, and be assured of their responsibilities and rankings in Heaven.

Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers are identified as ranks of angels according to Colossians (1:16-17)... "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

With this interpretation, the ranks of Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers for some of the angels in heaven can be established with general attributes assigned. If we examine and compare the same governments established by God on earth, then we can easily imagine the unseen government of angels to have the same characteristics as the known.



Romans adds, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Christ is the head of all

Christ has been set at the right hand of God and given authority to reign over all Principalities and Powers, both in the spirit realm and in the earthly realm. When we accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and saviour of our life, we are seated with Him, far above every Principality and Power in the spirit realm.

We are told to beware lest any man spoil us through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after



Brief introduction to the Nine Choirs of Angels

1. Seraphim

The Seraphim is said to be the highest order of angels who guard God's throne. They are often depicted as 'burning angels' to represent them on fire with love for God. In the Bible Isaiah saw them as six winged beings. These heavenly creatures praise God.

2. Cherubim

The word Cherubim is said to mean 'fullness of knowledge'. The Cherubim have the honour of observing and keeping the records of God's creative powers. Cherubims are said to have four wings and four faces. The Cherubims also act as heavenly counselors and are the seekers of the eternal truth.

3. Thrones

Throne angels represent the divine majesty and are associated with the power of judgement. They carry out God's justice according to spiritual and universal laws. The Thrones also act as angels who are friends of all the planets. It is the Thrones who will drive forward God's chariot, often they are portrayed as angels who carry the scales of justice.

4. Dominions

The Dominions are angels of leadership and are said to ensure that God's will is carried out by other angels. They help balance the force of creation and of the material and spiritual worlds. The Dominions represent the superiority of wisdom over intellect and govern the natural world and the elements.

5. Virtues

Virtues are known as angels who watch over the heavenly bodies and nature. The Virtues are often associated with miracles performed on earth. Shining

bright and often depicted with swords, shields or sceptres, these wonderful angels will assist you in your darkest hour.

6. Powers

Powers are warrior angels who maintain order around planet earth and protect it from being overthrown by Satan, defending the cosmos and human souls. They fight against evil spirits who attempt to wreak chaos through human beings.

7. Principalities

The Principalities are a realm of angels who keep a watchful eye of the nations of planet earth and its leaders. They are protectors of religion, giving strength in times of hardship.

8. Archangels

The Archangels are the most frequently mentioned throughout the Bible. They are the leaders of the angelic armies and are holy messengers of God. There are only three archangels acknowledged by the Catholic faith, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. They also command God's armies and act as guardian angels to leaders of world movements. They may be of this or other hierarchies like St Michael the Archangel.

9. Angels

These include guardian angels who are assigned by God to every human being at the moment of conception. Angels are closest to the material world and human beings. They deliver our prayers to God and return with God's answers. Guardian angels have the capacity to access all other angels at any time, their role is to watch over us during our lives. They are also the most caring and social of beings who assist those who ask for help.

the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Jesus Christ dwells in all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. We are complete in Christ, and Jesus Christ is the head of all Principality and Powers (Colossians 2:8-10).

Purity of intention

We ought to pray to the angel who guards our country as well as to its Patron Saint. Principalities are appointed to transmit to the archangels and angels the orders of God. Purity of intention is the virtue ascribed to Principalities, because in their high functions they never seek but the honour and interest of God alone. Let us imitate the Principalities and pray to them for purity of intention.

Noreen Bavister, UK



CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

Celebrating Christmas after the loss of a loved one

God of compassion, there is such a hole in my heart! Today should be a day of joy, but I feel only the emptiness and loss of someone so beloved. While the world celebrates around me, I remember Christmas celebrations of the past and I long to have my loved one with me. I bring my sorrows to you Lord and leave them at your feet. In my blind tears I wonder if anyone can possibly understand the depth of my sadness. Yes, you can. You sent your son to be *with* us in our deepest sorrows and I know that even though I might not feel it at this moment, you are here with me, grieving with me, caring for me in my sadness and loving me. Dearest Lord, help me to turn to the one I miss so much today and speak. Help me heal the loss of our parting and help me not

to regret the things I didn't say. Sad tears are in my heart, but today I ask that my loss and sad heart make me more compassionate with everyone I meet.

Prayer before Christmas Dinner

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful each of those who are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless you and give you thanks in your Spirit who brings our hearts to life this Christmas day and forever. Amen.

Psalm 33

The Lord sent his angel and saved me (cf. Ac 12:11)

The Lord rescues us not from hurt but from harm, through the power of the angels sent to guard us from evil in light and darkness all the days of our life and at the hour of our death.

A reading from the book of Exodus 23:20

The Lord says this "I myself will send an angel before you to guard you as you go and to bring you to the places that I have prepared. Give him reverence and listen to all that he says. Offer him no defiance; he would not pardon such a fault, for my name is in him. If you listen carefully to his voice and do all that I say, I shall be enemy to your enemies, foe to your foes. My angel will go before you."

10 tips to New Year's Resolutions



1. Be honest

Know yourself. What is your strongest virtue? What is your worst vice? Therefore, tailor your resolution so it strengthens your good side and fights your bad one. A one-size fits all resolution is useless.

2. Be specific

Do not use generalities. They do not work. For example, if you need to be more humble, just saying "I am going to be more humble" is useless. You need to zero in on one situation where you need to practice humility and resolve to improve on that one situation.

3. Be simple

Do not make it complicated. Focus on something you can see and measure easily and that does not overwhelm you each time you try to obtain it. Otherwise, you will become distracted and your energy will be dispersed and misdirected.

4. Be reasonable

Do not try to do too much at once. You will not become a saint in one day. Remember: you have one MAJOR point upon which is hinged your entire fidelity to God and His Holy Laws. This is called your primordial light. Find out what that is and work on improving it. Everything else will improve if you improve on that one major point.

5. Be consistent

It is far better to do something small everyday to improve on that one key

point in your soul than to make a big resolution that you cannot keep for more than a week or two. Slow and steady wins the race!

6. Be humble

Recognize that you cannot carry out any good action which has value in the supernatural order without God's grace and the intercessory help of the Blessed Mother. Beg God's grace through Our Lady's intercession constantly in all your thoughts, desires and actions

7. Be disinterested

Remember that God wants us to defend His rights and interests, and to share His thoughts and ways. Therefore, focus on things happening and events that are very close to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary that are not necessarily linked to our own personal interests.

8. Write it down

It is important to write down your resolution so you can refer back to it often during the year. Also, by writing it down, you will be able to review it when the year is over and to evaluate your progress since the time the resolution was made.

9. Public expressions of faith

Do not hide your faith. That is just what the Devil wants. He knows when you express your faith publicly, others see you and are encouraged to follow your good example. Say grace openly and

proudly before meals in a restaurant so people can see. You'll be surprised by the good reactions you will get.

10. Devotion to Our Lady

Have more devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Devotion to the Mother of God is a panacea. Saint Louis de Montfort said that devotion to Holy Mary is the easiest, safest, fastest, most secure and surest path to Jesus and to our own salvation. If you can do nothing else, resolve to say the rosary everyday. Saint Louis de Montfort wrote:

"If you say the rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, in spite of the gravity of your sins 'you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory'. Even if you are on the brink of damnation, even if you have one foot in hell, even if you have sold your soul to the Devil as sorcerers do who practice black magic and even if you are a heretic as obstinate as a devil, sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and will save your soul, if-- and mark well what I say-- if you say the Holy Rosary devoutly every day until death for the purpose of knowing the truth and obtaining contrition and pardon for your sins."

Taken from the website:
www.americaneedsfatima.org
 on 14th July, 2011



■ Grand Central Station, New York

A number of years ago I was a missionary in Bolivia and had to undertake some preaching for the missions in the States. I travelled by train from Boston to Grand Central station in New York and was on my way to the Mary Knoll Fathers to visit a sick priest somewhere along the Hudson River. When I arrived in Grand Central station I was completely disorientated and lost.

I started to ask people directions but when no one would stop and talk to me, I started to panic. “How do I manage to get out of this maze?” I thought. Then I decided to pray and I asked God very directly to send an angel to help me. I might add that even as a priest I never called on the angels that much and sometimes said the prayer to St Michael, but desperation kicked in. I prayed with determination and faith and just surrendered all my feelings of panic and fear. I then turned round and there was this rather tall mature looking young man and I asked him

if he could help me find the way to my destination.

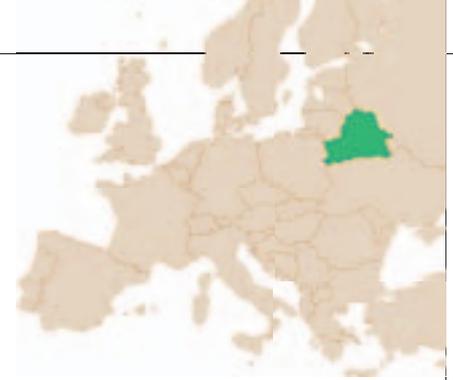
He suddenly said he was going to the exact same place and I should follow him. I duly obeyed and he took me up various stairs until eventually we arrived into the main concourse of Grand Central, which was the size of a football pitch and crowded with people running in all directions. “The man’ then directed me to the kiosk to purchase my train ticket and even told me that if I went to a certain one it would be a dollar cheaper, he said he would wait for me. I duly obeyed! We then walked very quickly to another escalator and went down various tunnels and other escalators until we came to a train, he told me this was the first of two we needed to get. The train was quite full so we ended up

sitting apart. I did not have a chance to have a conversation. It was as if I was in a dream. I could not get over what had happened. He next directed me to get off and it was not long until I boarded another train. ‘The man’ again sat apart from me and read a newspaper, eventually my stop was announced. I got up (he did not) and I waved goodbye. I was convinced he was an angel, I had this overpowering feeling it was so real and I am convinced to this day. It makes me feel I should have more faith and ask the angels help more often and ‘duly obey’!

God Bless,

Father **Michael McCormick**
St Leo’s Parish
Lickers Lane, Whiston,
Merseyside L35 3PN

Belarus Project



My dream is coming alive with your good and generous hearts to help the young and disadvantage children by building a pastoral centre where they can play, read books and receive assistance with their education.

This is now becoming more and more of a reality with your kind donations via the Global Children's Foundation. Work is going steadily on building the centre. However, I still need help as money is still required to finish the building and to furnish it. This will be a secure and loving centre full of life, a place to go. There they will find joy and friendship. Every child deserves that.

It would be wonderful for others, more fortunate, to help give these poor children a good chance in life. No gift is too small to help make a difference.

There are three easy ways to pay, please make all donations via the Global Children's Foundation.

Donate by Post

Please make your cheques payable to **Global Children's Foundation** and post to:

**Belarus Project
Global Children's Foundation
PO Box 4332, Harlington,
Dunstable, Beds LU6 9DG.
England.**

Donate By BACS

You can transfer money directly into the GCF bank account.

SORTCODE: 20-57-06

A/C NUMBER: 10469270

**BRANCH: Barclays, Mile End
Branch, London. England**

**NAME: GLOBAL CHILDREN'S
FOUNDATION**

Donate Securely Online

Please visit the GCF site:

www.globalchildrensfoundation.org.uk to find the link to our Just Giving page to make a one-off or monthly donation.

I am very grateful for your generosity and support. Every Tuesday (the day of St Michael the Archangel) I celebrate a Mass for all the donors of this project.

Special thanks to Father Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA, the chief editor of The Angels magazine, who is the patron of this work.

With my gift of prayer and a grateful heart. God bless you.

Father **Christopher Poświata** CSMA

Belarus Project

Global Children's Foundation

PO Box 4332, Harlington,

Dunstable, Beds LU5 6NR UK



2012

ENGLAND

30th November 2012

Holy Mass 7.30pm

Talk 1 Good & Bad Angels

– The dangers of New Age

Talk 2 Divine Mercy

The Holy Spirit Catholic Church

18 Cemetery Road

Heckmondwike, Near Leeds

West Yorkshire

WF16 9EB

Contact: Father John Abberton

Phone: +44 (0)1924-402-579

Email: holy.spirit@sky.com

1st December 2012

11.00am – 4.00pm

Talks on The Divine Mercy**and Pope John Paul II**

St Edwards RC Church

2 The Grove

Kettering

Northants NN15 7QQ

Phone: +44(0) 1536-512-497

Email: cannon.john@

stedwardsskettering.org.uk

3rd December 2012, 11.00am**Talk on Divine Mercy****and The Holy Angels**

St Patrick, Our Lady

& St Thomas Church

Langley Moor, near High Street

County Durham

DH7 8JJ

Phone:

Halina Holman 0191-378-3114

Email: Halina.holman@tesco.net

3rd December 2012

Holy Mass 6.30pm

Advanced talk on The Holy Angels

The Missionaries of Charity

(Bl Mother Thersa)

3 Durham Street

Newcastle Upton Tyne

NE4 6XP

Phone:

Halina Holman 0191-378-3114

Email: Halina.holman@tesco.net

2013

Advanced Talks on The Divine Mercy
and Pope John Paul II, Spiritual life
of St Faustina and her secrets.**St Michael and the Holy Angels**

IRELAND

2nd February 2013, 10.00am – 6.00pm

Drummond Hotel

Ballykelly Co Londonderry.

BT49 9HP

Email:holyangelsmagazine@gmail.com

Phone: +353-87-252-2862

Phone: +353-86- 352-0869

www.drummondhotel.com

3rd February 2013, 3.00pm

St Patrick Church

Drumkeen, Ballybofey,

Co. Donegal, Eire.

Further details contact:

+353(0)87 -252-2862

+353(0)86-352-5069

Email: holyangelsmagazine@gmail.com

4th February 2013, 6.00pm – 10.00pm

St Michael The Archangel Church

200 Finaghy Road North,

Belfast. Northern Ireland.

Contact: Fr. John Murray

Phone: +353 (0)289-091-3761

Email: stmichael_office@btinternet.com

WALES

15 – 17 February 2013

Life and mission**of the confessor of Saint Faustina****– blessed Father Michael Sopoćko**

Franciscan Friary,

Monastery Road, Pantasaph, Holywell.

Flintshire CH8 8PE

Contact: Br Keith Windsor (OFM)

Phone office: +44-1352-711-053

ENGLAND

6th April 2013, 2 .00pm – 7.30pm**Confession 5.30pm, Holy Mass at 6.30pm****Advanced Divine Mercy talks,****Pope John Paul II and St Faustina**

St John Bosco Catholic Church

58 Western Avenue

Woodley, Reading RG5 3BH

Email: divinemercyreading@gmail.com

Contact: Maria Gomez

Phone number: +44-7970-662 -905

7th April 2013, 2-5.00pm**Holy Mass 2.00pm****Advanced Divine Mercy talks,****Pope John Paul II and St Faustina**

Elmore Abbey

Church Lane, Speen

Newbury Berkshire

RG14 1SA

Contact: Pauline Mason

Phone: +44 (0)1635-230-883

Phone: +44 (0) 7767-078-642

8th April 2013 2.00pm**Advanced Divine Mercy Talks**

St Philip and St James Church

2 Seven Way

Bedford, MK41 7BX

Contact: Maggie Soloman

Phone: +44 (0) 1234-272-917

Email: moslomo@sky.com

SCOTLAND

8 -12 July 2013

New Dawn

Catholic Family Conference

St Andrews, Madras College

Fife, Scotland.

www.newdawninscotland.com

IRELAND

27th July 2013, 2 – 5.30pm**Holy Mass 2.00pm****Talk 1 Advanced Divine Mercy****Talk 2 St Michael the Archangel**

St Michael the Archangel House

Church Road,

Glann, nr Kilkelly.

Co Mayo. Eire

(5 minutes from Knock airport)

Contact: Noreen Bavister

Phone: +44 (0) 779-531-8605

WALES

11-13 October 2013

St Michael the Archangel**and his angels (New)**

Franciscan Friary,

Monastery Road,

Pantasaph, Holywell.

Flintshire CH8 8PE

Contact: Br Keith Windsor (OFM)

Phone office: +44-1352-711-053

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Phone: +27-845-236-078

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Piso 8 Departamento 2
Buenos Aires
C1425AAX, Argentina
Email: chminniti@gmail.com
Phone: +54-911-3911-7191

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Holy Spirit Catholic Church
2 Cooney St North Ryde
NSW 2113 Australia
Contact: Fr Stan Kluk CSMA
Phone: +61-298-882-569
Email: stankluk66@gmail.com

Sonia Starc
20 Field St, Craigieburn
Victoria 3064, Australia
Email: starcsonia@hotmail.com
Phone: +61-413-314-718

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Divine Mercy Center
Near Traffic Roundabout
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Contact: Marijana Dugandzic
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mariana.dugandzic@gmail.com
Phone: +387-63-403-614

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Phone: +4428-9032-7848
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Derry BT48 6DW.
Contact: Lucy Gillespie
Phone: +4428-7126-6888

Carmelite Retreat Centre
Termanbaccan Derry
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westvalecatholicparish
@btinternet.com

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Father Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA
Deputy Editor and Chief Co-ordinator:
Noreen Bavister

Chaplet of St Michael

L. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

A. *Amen*

Say the following prayer on the medal:

O God, come to my assistance.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

1. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Seraphim, may the Lord make us worthy to burn with the fire of perfect charity. Amen.
(1 Our Father on the first large bead, 3 Hail Mary on the next three small beads)

2. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Cherubim, may the Lord vouchsafe to grant us grace to leave the ways

of wickedness, to run in the paths of Christian perfection. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

3. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Thrones, may the Lord infuse into our hearts a true and sincere spirit of humility. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

4. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Dominions, may the Lord give us grace to govern our senses and subdue our unruly passions. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

5. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Powers, may the Lord vouchsafe to protect our souls against the snares and temptations of the Devil. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

6. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Virtues, may the Lord deliver us from evil and suffer us not to fall into temptation. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

7. By the intercession of St Michael and the Celestial Choir of Principalities, may God fill our souls with a true spirit of obedience. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

8. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Archangels, may the Lord give us perseverance in faith and in all good works, in order that we gain the glory of Paradise. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

9. By the intercession of St Michael and the celestial Choir of Angels, may the Lord grant us to be protected by them in this mortal life and conducted hereafter to eternal glory. Amen.

(1 Our Father, 3 Hail Mary)

Recite on the next four beads:

1 Our Father

in honour of St Michael

1 Our Father

in honour of St Gabriel

1 Our Father

in honour of St Raphael

1 Our Father

in honour of our Guardian Angel

O glorious prince, St Michael, chief and commander of the heavenly hosts, guardian of souls, vanquisher of rebel spirits, servant in the house of the Divine King, and our admirable conductor, who shines with excellence and superhuman virtue, vouchsafe to deliver us from evil, who turn to you with confidence, and enable us by your gracious protection to serve God more and more faithfully every day. Amen.



Prayer of Pope Leo XIII

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the Divine Power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.