



The Angels

Messengers from a loving God



The Knighthood Coat of Arms designed by Noreen Bavister © of CSMA

St Michael the Exorcist

Scapular, angelic shield
The meaning of holy water
Uganda, a country of faith
The cross, a symbol of our faith



The mysteries of faith are often described in symbols and parables. Jesus often spoke in such a way about the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven. Little by little Jesus will help us to understand more and more of these mysteries.

The mercy of God is hidden in the Blessed Sacrament. The tabernacle is called “the throne of mercy established by Jesus”. From that throne He desires to enter into man’s heart (Diary 1485). Often during the adoration Jesus spoke to St Faustina. She also saw the rays of mercy coming out of the image through the host; she said: “Once the image was being exhibited over the altar during the Corpus Christ procession. When the priest exposed the Blessed Sacrament, and the choir began to sing, the rays from the image pierced the Sacred Host and spread out all over the world. Then I heard these words: ‘These rays of mercy will pass through you, just as they have passed through this Host, and they will go out through all the world’ ” (Diary 441).

She experienced the power of the Bread of Life, which is Jesus. St Faustina confessed: “I fear the day when I do not receive Holy Communion. This Bread gives me all the strength I need to carry on my mission and the courage to do whatever the Lord asks of me. The

courage and strength that are in me are not of me, but of Him who lives in me, it is the Eucharist. O my Jesus, the misunderstandings are so great; sometimes, were it not for the Eucharist, I would not have the courage to go further along the way that You have marked out for me” (Diary 91).

Today let’s thank God for all his words, which we hear and read in the Bible. Let’s thank Him for all the priests and lay preachers to whom we listen. In the darkness of our lives, let’s look for the enlightenment in God’s words. These words are able to broaden our horizons, show us the proper solution and guide us safely to heaven. They can make our hearts burn.

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.

Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA

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Who is like God?



In the Bible we read how Michael and his angels overcame "the great dragon and his angels, that is, the Serpent of old, known as the Devil and Satan who has seduced the whole of the Earth" (Rev 12:9).

They conquered thanks to the blood of the Lamb. And the salvation, power and reign of our God and the authority of his Anointed have come to pass. It is our Lord Jesus Christ, the vanquisher of death, hell and Satan, who has overcome all evil by his death on the cross and by his Resurrection. It is our Lord, God's Anointed, who grants power to the angels whom he has sent, so that they may protect mankind and do battle with the evil one. It is by His power that Michael has vanquished the Serpent of old and his angels.

St Michael the Archangel belongs to the company of the three holy Archangels, who are God's chosen servants, assigned by Him to protect human beings. "Michael" means "Who is like God?" By this we should understand that, as God has created all the heavenly beings, as well as heaven and

earth and mankind, so all creatures are subject to almighty God. St Michael the Archangel has been defined in Holy Scripture as the leader of the heavenly armies, that is, of the angels who are faithful to God. He protects God's friends by the power of God's Word, as well as being patron of the universal Church, which regards him as its helper in the battle against the powers of evil in the world. St Michael is pictured as an angel with a sword or lance in his hand, by means of which he casts the disobedient evil spirits into hell. The sword in his hands signifies the power of God's Word, which accomplishes God's purpose. We read in St Paul that the Word of God is something alive and active, it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely, that it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. The evil spirits are continually present in the world and mankind's spirit has been weakened by original sin and is susceptible to the influence and promptings of the evil spirits. We all experience this in our own lives.

A particular sign of the presence of evil spirits in the contemporary world is violence which people use against one another, and even against whole groups of people in society. We hear of and experience such acts of violence daily. It is enough to turn on the radio or television or to read the papers. The

main headlines usually involve acts of violence, which are regarded as being the main news stories. These sell best and are most sought after. The good things which happen around us are seen as being so ordinary that they are not worth talking or writing about. Evil, on the contrary, of which there is less, seems to be more important and more worthy of our attention.

Who, however, is more powerful than God Himself? Who is like God? This is why an attitude of overcoming evil by good is possible. Who can separate us from the love of God? Neither oppression nor persecution, hunger or sword. Nothing can separate us if we remain in Christ.

St 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.

Bishop **Rudolf Pierskala**, Poland

A fragment of the sermon given on the occasion of the visit of the statue of St Michael the Archangel to the parish of the Blessed Czeslaw in Opole.

St Jerome (part 3)

Jerome had initially been a great admirer of Origen and quoted him as an authority in many of his works. However, as a result of the influence of the wave of opposition to Origen, initiated by Epiphanius of Salamina, he diametrically changed his position, becoming a furious critic of Origen's ideas as potential sources of new heresies.

The Antichrist: dispute about Origen

He rejected the concept of the Antichrist being an evil spirit. He accepted that he would be the one and only person in whom Satan would become incarnate. He would be of Jewish origin and would be born of a virgin, which would be a grotesque parody of the birth of the Son of God. The Antichrist would hold high office in the Church, perhaps even sit on the Throne of Peter in Rome and he would hold tyrannical power, based on fear and the use of force. He would die in the very place in which Christ, according to tradition, ascended to heaven, that is, on the Mount of Olives.

The furious dispute which Jerome conducted against Rufus, a former friend, touched mainly upon details of translations of particular works of Origen, on the extent of the ethics and responsibility of the translator: inaccurate translations can, on occasion, lead to absurdity, while loose translations can alter the meaning of a text. According to Jerome, it was entirely inadmissible to omit entire doctrinally inconvenient sentences, as Rufus was said to have done, for instance, passing over in silence Origen's speculations on the subject of the Devil's

eternal punishment and the possibility of his eventually attaining salvation. Condemning Origen's stance, Jerome writes: "If, however, someone should contradict the fact that the Devil is condemned to the eternal fire, that person should also experience this punishment in part with him (i.e. the Devil), and come to believe in that which he has rejected. Rather, you should, in order to avoid the "salvation of the Devil", say that "You have become for them an object of dread. Your existence has ended forever" (Apologetic against Rufus). Elsewhere, Jerome thunders against Origen in a very unpleasant manner: "He has fallen into a state of such stupidity, and even into insanity, so that he now insults the Saviour in a criminal manner, saying, that he will be crucified in the heavens for the iniquities of the demons and he does not realise how deep is the chasm into which he is falling" (see Letter 96).

Translator or plagiarist?

Jerome did not add much to the body of Christian teaching about the angels and his views on this subject were moderate. He did not generally engage in speculative theology,

for which he had no talent and in which he had no interest. He has entered history as the author of the first complete translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, known as the 'Vulgate' (the name comes from 'editio vulgata' meaning 'popular edition'). Jerome did not bow to pressure from those around him (from, among others, St Augustine) to use the Septuaginta as the basis of his translation rather than the original Hebrew. While his translation had initially many opponents, it was increasingly valued over the centuries and, by the 12th century, was acknowledged as the best Biblical translation.

Jerome was a matchless translator, not only fluent in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (he described himself as being tri-lingual), but he also perfectly understood the cultural context of these various regions, had a lively interest in the theoretical aspects of translation, and enjoyed debating its various nuances. Almost as a by-product of his translation work, he also wrote a number of commentaries to particular books of the Bible, making use of material taken from rabbinical exegesis. As a digression in his writings he would often quote Jewish customs and proverbs. Jerome's biblical commentaries were historical and philosophical in nature, avoiding the use of allegory, and



■ St Jerome visited by angels by Bartolomeo Cavarozzi, early 17th c.

his etymological research frequently provided pertinent insights.

On the other hand, in his wish to captivate readers with the extent of his knowledge, Jerome was in the habit of plagiarising whole sections from the works of other authors (mainly Origen and Tertullian) with no mention of their authorship, or else he used the generalisation “as is said by others”.

He was aggressive and violent, sneering and vengeful, sensitive to criticism, continually seeking praise. He was known for his sharp and penetrating wit and coarse witticisms as well as for his love of polemic and intrigue. He called his main opponent and erstwhile friend, Rufus, ‘a fattened boar’, and continued to persecute him even after his death.

In very general terms, we should mention that the debate on the orthodoxy or otherwise of Origen’s ideas involved many Early Christian intellectuals, divided into two opposing camps, pro and anti-Origen. Jerome did not hesitate to translate a malicious pamphlet against the entirely blameless

St John Chrysostom into Latin, thereby adding his own share of blame to the eventual martyrdom of this great Father of the Eastern Church. He criticised Ambrose, Vigilantius, Jovinian and Augustine. He called Christians of other denominations “cattle destined for butchering in hell”. In conclusion, he was violent in nature, not always capable of self-control. However, he enjoyed difficult situations which goaded him into action. Paradoxically, let us quote his beautiful words on the subject of forgiveness: “If we do not forgive our brothers their minor transgressions, then God will not forgive us our major ones” (see Commentary on the Gospel of St Matthew). Some consider him to be completely devoid of self-criticism, a view contradicted by the following avowal “As I have not completely broken with my transgressions to the extent that I had initially wished to do so, the Devil has once again trapped me with new snares” (see Letter 2 to Theodosius and other anchorites (in) Letters). His difficult character does not diminish the

achievements of Jerome, regarded (together with Augustine) as the most prominent and erudite of the Fathers of the Latin Church. He was a creature of the West, attached to specifics. Living for many years in Bethlehem, he was entirely uninterested in the kind of problems of metaphysical theology which were so important to Eastern Christianity. As a theologian, Jerome was conservative and old-fashioned. Jerome’s significance lies, above all, in his work as a translator, in his exegesis and humanism.

The main centre of the cult of Jerome is based in the grotto in Bethlehem in which the saint spent the later years of his life (at present, this lies below the Franciscan Church of St Catherine, which is next to the Basilica of the Nativity). He is particularly venerated by Croatians as their patron saint, as he originated from that part of the world. Jerome has also become an important and popular figure in European literature and art.

Herbert Oleschko, Poland

Interested in becoming a Devotional Knight of St Michael?



The Knighthood is overseen by the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel. During a trial period of three months the candidate should follow all the rules of this devotion. After a three month trial period a woman or man can then make a promise between themselves and God privately.

Many Knights read *The Angels Messengers* from a loving God magazine to gain more knowledge on the spirituality of the angels and Divine Mercy.

Devotional Knights are people of quiet prayer, confirmed Catholics, who are open to the Holy Spirit and give themselves to Christ, unite with Him, and help the Church by keeping demons away from Her.

The main duty of the Knights is the continuous effort to be in a state of grace in friendship with God so they can exclaim about Satan: "He has no power over me" (John 14:30).

All Knights must respect the Holy Father, bishops, priests and all the teachings of the Church. An attitude of humility and obedience towards God and the Church should be an obvious feature of every Knight. Any

Catholic man or woman who desires to become a Knight is required to follow the rules of this devotion. The main task of the Knights is to proclaim the victory of Jesus Christ over Satan. The Knights are 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 (which is on page 31 of the current issue and in the new). This simple prayer of exorcism said every day is to keep away evil spirits from oneself, the Church and the whole world, particularly from those that are tempted and possessed by Satan. To help one another Devotional Knights say a prayer for each other every day.

For further information on the Devotional Knights of St Michael please contact me personally by letter or email redakcja.kjb@gmail.com.

Father **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA
General Animator of the Knighthood
Congregation of St Michael
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The Promise

I, (your name) a repentant sinner, renounce Satan and resolve to follow Jesus Christ. I express my faith in the Holy Trinity and the Holy Church. After my trial period, today in the presence of God, St Michael and the Holy Angels, I promise to be a Knight of St Michael to the end of my life and to take part in the spiritual battle for the salvation of souls. I entrust myself to St Michael as my Patron and Protector in this devotion.

My weapons are:

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

May God help me to fulfil this devotion. St Michael the Archangel pray for me. Amen.

The Knighthood Coat of Arms

Our coat of arms represents two important mottos closely related to the patron saint of the Michaelite Fathers. It displays a round coat divided into two fields. On the left there is a gold sword the symbol of the spiritual battle. Because of its brightness gold symbolises what is precious and valuable and so symbolises the presence of God, majesty, joy and celebration.

On the right is St Michael the Archangel – “Who is like God” the first knight and defender of the heavenly fight for justice and souls. The white violet background is the colour of humility, purity, holiness and virtue, as well as respect and reverence in the symbolism of the Catholic Church.

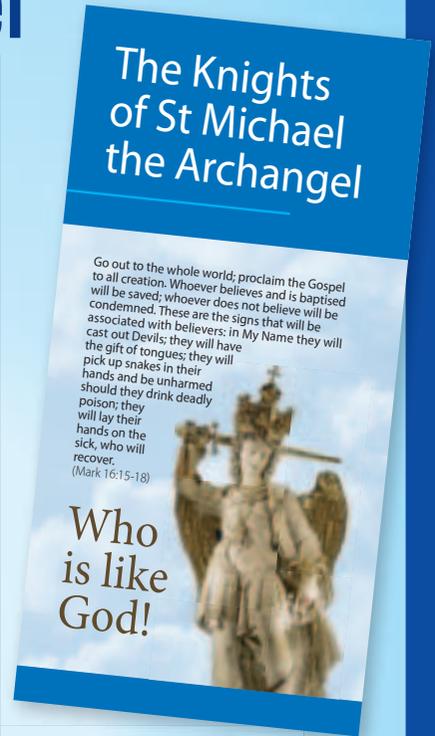
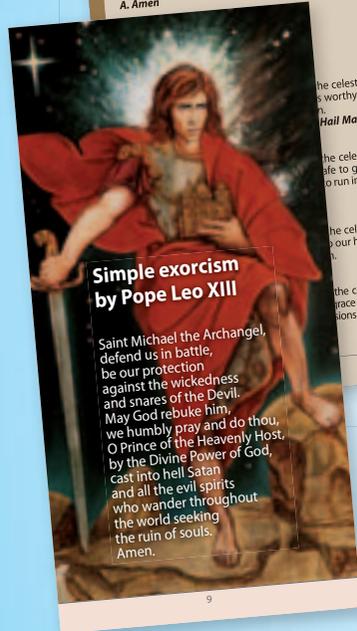
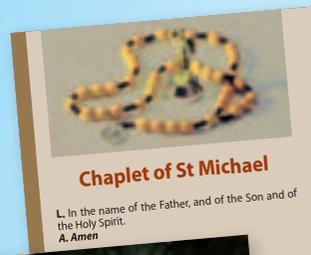
Our coat of arms on the front cover of The Angels magazine was designed by Noreen Bavister in August 2013 when the Devotional Knighthood of St Michael the Archangel was approved.

Badges and tie pins will be available shortly.

To order – write, phone or email:
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First Bishop from the Michaelites



His Holiness Pope Francis appointed the Reverend Joseph Dabrowski CSMA as Auxiliary Bishop of London, Ontario, Canada. His ordination took place on Tuesday April 14th 2015 in London.

He completed the one year novitiate and a year of internship in Poland; he was selected to study in Italy at the St Peter Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Viterbo. He graduated from the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm in Rome and was ordained at the Pontifical Sanctuary of Santa Maria ad Rupes, in Italy, on May 4, 1991.

The same year, he was assigned to join the Michaelite community in London and has served in Ontario since then.

Bishop Dabrowski's uncle, a hard-working, faithful and committed priest, is credited with influencing the bishop's call to the priesthood. In addition, a Michaelite missionary priest sparked Dabrowski's initial interest in serving the poor and marginalized overseas, far from his Polish home. They prayed together, ate their meals together and attended Sunday Mass together. Although life at home in Poland was simple, the fact that the family was together always made for joyous times, whether this involved playing with siblings, working hard on the family farm, or the devotion to family prayer. Bishop Dabrowski's parents lived in Wysoka Strzyzowska, southern Poland; it was here where

he grew up that the foundations were laid for his life of faith. Daily prayer was a priority and his family were very close.

The new bishop has served as associate pastor at Our Lady of Częstochowa (London), 1992-1993; Saint Michael (Leamington), 1993-1996; Saint Pius X (now Holy Family, London), 1996-1997; and Saint Mary (London), 1997-1998. In 1998 he was named pastor of Saint Mary, and in 2013 appointed superior of the North American Vice-Province of the Michaelites. In the Diocese of London, he has also served on the Ministry to Priests committee, the Council of Priests, the Cemetery Advisory Board, and the Linguistic Communities committee. He is fluent in English, Polish and Italian, and has studied Russian, Latin and Spanish.

The Diocese of London has 130 parishes and missions, with a population of 444,310 Catholics, served by 110 diocesan priests, 58 priests who are members of religious institutes, 51 permanent deacons, 479 religious sisters and brothers, and 78 lay pastoral workers.

The Angels magazine office CSMA
Poland

At the time of his appointment, the Bishop was Superior of the North American Vice-Province of "St Kateri Tekakwitha" of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel (the Michaelite Fathers) and pastor of St Mary Parish, Ontario, in the Diocese of London. He will assist the Bishop of London, the Most Reverend Ronald Peter Fabbro, CSB.

Bishop Dabrowski, 50, was born on July 17, 1964 in Poland to parents Czeslawa and Ludwik Dabrowski, the second of five children.

After graduating from a high school run by the Michaelite Fathers, he decided to enter the religious order.

A kiss from heaven

Until you read the story of the thirteen-year-old servant of God, Anfronsina Bernardi (1920 - 1933), you may ask what do angels have to do with appendicitis? And, is it possible that a child's unsuccessful operation could convert an entire village?

It was on Christmas morning 1932 while experiencing an ecstatic vision of the angelic hosts, that Alfonsina called out to her mother to bring her a trumpet and mandolin so she could join in with the angelic choirs playing to the glory of God. Unfortunately, the Berardi family was too poor to afford such luxuries as musical instruments. But, undaunted by poverty and serious illness, the girl sang "Glory to God in the highest" along with her angelic companions.

Anfrosina was the ninth and last child of poor farmers. She lived in the small village of San Marco di Preturo in Italy, where neighbours knew each other like family and worked together in the fields. The women cooked, sewed and washed clothes together and the children chased one another round the courtyards or splashed each other with the icy water from the well.

The youngest daughter of the Berardi family was known for her mild disposition and practice of virtue. She put up with the numerous childish quarrels which arose daily among her many siblings, with unusual patience. From her very earliest years she had a strong devotion to God the Father and to Our Lady.

The sudden onset of appendicitis brought an end to her childhood and was the beginning of enormous suffering for Anfrosina. It all began

quite normally. One April day, the eleven-year-old girl had acute pains. When homely remedies for the pain proved useless, she was taken to the hospital in Aquila. The appendix was removed, but infection had spread to the rest of her body.

Anfrosina writhed in pain while her helpless parents watched their daughter's ordeal in despair. However, she endured her suffering with heroic acceptance. Her attitude helped to transform her parents' sadness into trust in God. Soon, crowds of neighbours, as well as complete strangers, appeared at her bedside, feeling moved by her peace and by her smile in spite of physical torments.

It soon came to light that Anfrosina was also receiving guests from heaven. This news brought even greater crowds. Many sceptics and gossips came simply to gape at this extraordinary child. However, the majority, inspired by Anfrosina's story, renewed their relationship with God and began to pray and change their lives. People would ask her for prayers, which she denied to no-one. Despite her acute pain and torment, she welcomed everyone with patience and a smile and answered numerous questions.

Anfrosina was privileged to receive frequent visits from Our Lady, with whom she held mystical conversations. The Madonna asked her to offer



up her sufferings for herself, for sinners and for the holy souls in purgatory. The girl also had the rare gift of bilocation and visions of angels. Not long before Anfrosina's death, Our Lady kissed her on the forehead and assured her that they would meet in heaven. With childish simplicity, she recounted this to her mother one day when she saw her looking very troubled.

"Don't worry, Mummy. After all, I am going to meet with Mary in heaven."

In 1962, the Archbishop of Aquila commenced the information process of her cause for beatification.

Let Anfrosina's example remind us that, out of every difficulty, out of every illness or suffering, God is able to bring good for us and for those close to us. May we only (remember to) ask His help in all our needs and concerns.

Agata Pawlowska, Poland ▶

St Michael – the first Exorcist

The Dominican Republic is a country of stark contrasts, with the happy nature of its inhabitants, its landscapes an earthly paradise, on one hand, and the poverty and ever-present spiritual dangers on the other. Father Jan Drabczak, CSMA, tells us of his missionary work in this unique country.



How did your adventures with the angels begin?

In childhood I had prayed in front of the two pictures of the angels in my bedroom. Over time, this devotion had faded, as belief in the angels is, after all, not essential to our salvation. It was only much later, after having had contact with the world of evil spirits that I came to understand how useful the angels are to us.

What led you to discover your calling, particularly as a missionary priest?

I can see the working of the Will of God in the fact of my becoming a missionary. Obviously, this is one of the charisms of the Michaelite Congregation, but I had always had an interest in the missions. Even while I was still in the seminary, my Superior had encouraged me to go out to Belarus, and that had been the start. The Superior General then proposed that I should work in the Dominican Republic. That was in 1996, when I knew absolutely nothing about the Dominican Republic and had actually expected to be sent once again to Belarus. My parish priest then said to me: “You are a priest, so go! If it doesn’t work out, you can always come back.”

Were you very frightened?

I was genuinely worried about what life would be like there. However, I did know that if I turned it down, my superiors would not offer me such an opportunity again. I took this as a sign that I could not reject.

So, how did you get on when you were hit with the reality of life over there?

There are statistics which show the Dominican Republic as being, after Costa Rica, the happiest country in the world. Christopher Columbus had already referred to it as being an earthly paradise. Tourists love to visit it, not just for the beauty of its landscape, but also because of its people. Their joy is genuinely attractive, as there is something beautiful about it and even failure is laughed off with a smile. Everything in life is treated casually, which has its positive as well as negative aspects.

Presumably, not everything was as positive as it may have initially appeared?

There were the obvious cultural and linguistic difficulties. Here, you need to be able to understand not only the actual language but also the context in which

it is set, in order to make sense of what is being said to you. There is also the lack of organisation and the culture of ‘mañana’, meaning ‘sometime’. So, when the water supply to the parish house was cut off, and the man who was to come to fix it ‘in a while’ arrived two weeks later, he was genuinely surprised that I was so put out at his lateness. Even brides must arrive at least half an hour late for their wedding (laughs).

There are obviously major economic difficulties. The Dominican Republic is a third world country. When I moved to this parish in 1997, it took until 2003 before we had electricity. And then, unfortunately, the churches also emptied, as the culture of meeting together at Mass became replaced by one of watching television.

This also ties in with issues of access to education and healthcare. According to the latest available statistics, out of a population of almost 10 million people, 800,000 are illiterate. Universal national insurance benefits were only introduced in 2009. The people did have a way round these difficulties, however. If, for instance, someone was ill and needed money for an operation, a collection would spontaneously be taken up for this purpose at Mass.



Everyone would contribute, knowing full well that they themselves might require such help on another occasion. They are a simple people, but there is also wisdom in that very simplicity.

How do these various difficulties translate to your missionary work?

Our missionary work here is now moving-on from the stage of constructing the church building, to one of pastoral formation. It is certainly a mark of success that the Church has organised itself and that we are now functioning, not as disparate groups within the parish but as a hierarchical community.

Religious instruction is an essential component of our pastoral ministry, as much for adults as for children, who often know little about God and do not regularly practice their religion. The geography of the area creates other complications. In the past, I needed to reach some places which required an 8 hour round-trip across mountainous terrain in order to say Mass. Such a visit, however, would be a momentous event for the people, a real celebration, when I would have to administer the Sacraments 'in advance', given that it would be a month until my next visit, just as long as the rainy season did not cause the roads to be impassable.

It is important to plan our pastoral work. For instance, were a new parish priest there would already be a plan for religious instruction in place, to run until the end of the year. It is beautiful and very important for our parishioners that we take decisions together, as a community.

So it would seem, that, despite difficulties, things are not so bad, as far as the spiritual development of the Dominican people is concerned?

The situation here is not quite so idyllic. There is still a kind of hidden slavery on the sugar plantations. In many places, particularly in the more remote areas, black magic is still practised. There is also the influence of voodoo from neighbouring Haiti.

So it would seem as if the situation is much worse in Haiti?

I recently read an interesting comment by one of the bishops on this very subject. He claims that such events as the recent earthquake are the result of a drifting away from God by the Haitian people. This was because the earthquake had claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in Haiti, while it barely affected the people of the Dominican Republic, even though both countries lie on the same island. I can recall quite clearly how, (during the earthquake) I myself fell over at the altar while saying Mass.

So the earthquake was likened to a present-day version of the destruction of Sodom? It's quite a brave thing to voice such a theory...

I am surprised that this particular bishop was brave enough to voice such a theory. But, nevertheless, I do believe it to be true. I once went to visit the Jesuits in Haiti with one of our Polish bishops. One of the Jesuits reminded

us that, historically, Haiti is a country descended from slaves who brought their own beliefs with them. During this time of enslavement they entrusted the country to the Evil One for a period of 200 years. That 200 year period ended in 2005, so there is hope. It is not the case that the Haitians had wished evil on themselves. They wished to be free, and, given that those who enslaved them used the Name of God, the slaves therefore turned to the enemy of God.

I do continue to wonder how it is that, although Haiti obtains so much international aid, it is unable to move on and develop. I've been following the history of that country ever since coming to the Dominican Republic. Each effort is followed by yet another disaster. But to return to matters of faith. Voodoo as a religion is enshrined in Haiti's constitution. Its witch-doctors continue to have a huge influence on the community. This belief is so palpable and obvious that Dominicans are actually afraid of Haitians.

I'll give an actual example of how far voodoo has crept into the Haitian culture. On Holy Thursday, the bishops distribute the oil of the chrism and oils for the anointing of the sick to priests at the Chrism Mass. On the island of Dominica, (divided between the two countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic) there is also distributed the oil of catechumens, with the recommendation that it be used at baptisms. This is because each baptism is also an exorcism. Everyone wants their children to be baptised, but nobody wants to prepare for baptism. For many, baptism is viewed as a magical ritual, akin to those carried-out by the witch-doctors.

It is often the case that the witch-doctors send ordinary, simple people to have their amulets blessed by a priest. We continually find dolls, into which pins have been stuck, at cemeteries. ▶

► **Which is the reason why St Michael, as the original exorcist, seems particularly necessary here?**

This is where the pilgrimage of St Michael's statue comes in. For over 30 years now, we have been teaching about the significance of St Michael. But this presents difficulties, given that people think of him in the context of magic spells and charms. Here, all the local witches and witch-doctors attend church on the 29th September and ask the priest to bless their statues.

I recall one of the first occasions, when, as a young priest, I was called out to visit a sick young woman. Immediately after I had put on my stole, she sat up in bed and let out a sound which I can only compare to the roar of a lion. She later began to enumerate a list of my sins. That is how Satan frightens people. I was so horrified that I left the place immediately. I had previously heard of such things happening, but this was the first time that I had experienced them personally.

Yes, but surely something had to be done for that woman...

After a sleepless night I phoned the bishop the following day. With stoical calmness, he told me to go to confession and to recite the rite of exorcism.

Which was when you came back to the realisation of how much you need the angels?

Yes. It is perhaps an over-simplification to compare it to a situation in which we could expect to function in the present day without the use of a car or a telephone. In other words, while it may be possible, who would actually want to live that way?

So, you managed to overcome your fear of the Evil One?

Yes, helped by a friend who had been a missionary in the Cameroon. There are instances there where people may pay a witch-doctor to put a spell or curse on someone they wish to harm. One of these witch-doctors admitted that his 'magic' had proved ineffective against a woman who simply... prayed too much. I recommend this remedy to the inhabitants of Dominica who are afraid of spells and ask them to use prayer as their protection and armour. I recommend that they live in a state of grace, so that they will be capable of picking themselves up after falling into sin. They will then have nothing to fear. The more holy people there are, the greater will be the defeat of the Evil One. I myself recite the prayer to St Michael the Archangel at moments

when I feel frightened. The fear then disappears. I now know that I should be 'crazy' and 'reckless' in my work and in my faith. The greatest challenge and mission of a priest is not to fear the Devil. He is incredibly cunning. I remember an occasion when, after Mass, a possessed woman attempted to attack me. I called out: "Stop – in the name of Jesus!" She immediately sat down.

All this can seem to us Europeans like happenings out of a fairy tale. And that is a sign of the Devil's greatest success – to make people believe that he does not exist. He does not even bother to make himself known to us. Those whom he attacks most are those who know of the truth of his existence.

Do you ever regret having chosen such a difficult path?

I have found my vocation here and cannot now imagine resigning from my mission. Even when I am on holiday, I soon find myself missing the Dominican Republic. You need to experience this country in order to understand this feeling.

So it is worth it?

I would answer 'Yes'. When I had an amoeba and lay sick, hundreds of people queued to visit me. They came. They supported me. They assured me of their prayers. That was beautiful and such love breeds love. Over there your parish is a family.

Even now, while I am in Poland, I know that my parishioners are awaiting my return and will eagerly question me about my trip. In such moments, you know that it is all worth it. A parent is ready to sacrifice everything when they see a child's gratitude and love.

Daniel Kociołek and Karol Wojteczek
were speaking to **Fr Jan Drabczak CSMA**



My Guardian Angel

*God gave you a loving task
 from the first moment of my life, till the last.
 To guard me, to keep me safe,
 to whisper gently with love, the right way to turn.
 To laugh with me, to cry with me,
 to walk with me through my pains.
 To hold my hand when darkness comes,
 to enfold me with your loving wings when I suffer.*

*Oh beautiful guardian angel
 with me every second of my life
 through all the years.
 Thank you for being faithful to The Lord,
 forgive me for all the times
 I have forgotten you are there.
 For the times you have protected me,
 my love I now give you.
 Let me think of you often my beautiful angel,
 because out of all the angels in heaven,
 The Lord picked you specially for me.*

*Oh beautiful angel,
 dear to me my angel.
 From the first moment till the end,
 trusted by God with a wonderful mission.
 Is your mission nearly complete?
 Will you hold my hand at the end?
 When you see Jesus take my hand?
 Will you weep with joy
 to see Your mission completed?
 Will you sing songs of joy at the sight?
 Will you sing to Jesus
 when He takes me into his loving arms
 to the place he has prepared for me,
 and says to you
 "Well done faithful angel of mine,
 your task is now complete"?*

Teresa Smith
 Lancashire, England



■ Archangel Raphael with Tobias by Pietro Perugino, c. 1500

Proclaiming Divine Mercy

Mother of Mercy

These words of the Church at Easter re-echo in the fullness of their prophetic content the words that Mary uttered during her visit to Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah: “His mercy is...from generation to generation.” At the very moment of the Incarnation, these words open up a new perspective of salvation history. After the resurrection of Christ, this perspective is new on both the historical and the eschatological level. From that time onwards there is a succession of new generations of individuals in the immense human family, in ever-increasing dimensions; there is also a succession of new generations of the People of God, marked with the Sign of the Cross and of the resurrection and “sealed” with the sign of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, the absolute revelation of the mercy that Mary proclaimed on the threshold of her kinswoman’s house: “His mercy is...from generation to generation.”

Mary is also the one who obtained mercy in a particular and exceptional way, as no other person has. At the same time, still in an exceptional way, she made possible with the sacrifice of her heart her own sharing in revealing God’s mercy. This sacrifice is intimately linked with the cross of her Son, at the foot of which she was to stand on Calvary. Her sacrifice is a unique sharing in the revelation of mercy, that is, a sharing in the absolute fidelity of God to His own love, to the covenant that He willed from eternity and that He entered into in time with man, with the people, with humanity; it is a sharing in that revelation that was definitively fulfilled through the cross. No one has experienced, to the same degree as the Mother of the crucified One, the

mystery of the cross, the overwhelming encounter of divine transcendent justice with love: that “kiss” given by mercy to justice. No one has received into his heart, as much as Mary did, that mystery, that truly divine dimension of the redemption effected on Calvary by means of the death of the Son, together with the sacrifice of her maternal heart, together with her definitive “fiat”.

Mary, then, is the one who has the deepest knowledge of the mystery of God’s mercy. She knows its price, she knows how great it is. In this sense, we call her the Mother of mercy: our Lady of mercy, or Mother of divine mercy; in each one of these titles there is a deep theological meaning, for they express the special preparation of her soul, of her whole personality, so that



■ Pieta by William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1876.

she was able to perceive, through the complex events, first of Israel, then of every individual and of the whole of humanity, that mercy of which “from generation to generation” people become sharers according to the eternal design of the most Holy Trinity.

The above titles which we attribute to the Mother of God speak of her principally, however, as the Mother of the crucified and risen One; as the One who, having obtained mercy in an exceptional way, in an equally exceptional way “merits” that mercy throughout her earthly life and, particularly, at the foot of the cross of her Son; and finally as the one who, through her hidden and at the same time incomparable sharing in the messianic mission of her Son, was called in a special way to bring close to people that love which He had come to reveal: the love that finds its most concrete expression

vis-a-vis the suffering, the poor, those deprived of their own freedom, the blind, the oppressed and sinners, just as Christ spoke of them in the words of the prophecy of Isaiah, first in the synagogue at Nazareth and then in response to the question of the messengers of John the Baptist.

It was precisely this “merciful” love, which is manifested above all in contact with moral and physical evil, that the heart of her who was the Mother of the crucified and risen One shared in singularly and exceptionally. In her and through her, this love continues to be revealed in the history of the Church and of humanity. This revelation is especially fruitful because in the Mother of God it is based upon the unique tact of her maternal heart, on her particular sensitivity, on her particular fitness to reach all those who most easily accept the merciful love

of a mother. This is one of the great life-giving mysteries of Christianity, a mystery intimately connected with the mystery of the Incarnation.

“The motherhood of Mary in the order of grace,” as the Second Vatican Council explains, “lasts without interruption from the consent which she faithfully gave at the annunciation and which she sustained without hesitation under the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. In fact, being assumed into heaven she has not laid aside this office of salvation but by her manifold intercession she continues to obtain for us the graces of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she takes care of the brethren of her Son who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home.”

Taken from www.vatican.va

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FAQs about the Scapular of St Michael the Archangel

Given the sheer number of telephone calls, emails and letters which we receive regarding the scapular, we thought it would be useful to include the following compendium of prepared answers to frequently asked questions, compiled by Father Rafał Sz wajca CSMA, in the magazine. We would also like to encourage you to continue to send us your own questions on this subject.

What is the scapular of St Michael the Archangel?

The scapular of St Michael the Archangel is an outward sign of entrustment to St Michael and of belonging to the Michaelite family. It is worn in order to propagate the veneration of St Michael the Archangel. People who have accepted the scapular are called to serve Christ and His Church in the spirit of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel, as seen in its mottoes of 'Who is like to God?' and 'Temperance and Work'.

When was the first such scapular introduced?

The very first scapular of St Michael the Archangel was introduced in the 19th century in the Church of St Eustace in Rome and belonged to the Brotherhood of St Michael the Archangel, established in Rome on 30th August 1878. Unlike most scapulars, rather than being rectangular in shape, it was made in the shape of a shield. One side is navy-blue in colour, the other black, with these same two colours on the ribbons. Both ends of the scapular had a picture of St Michael the Archangel killing the dragon and the words 'Quis ut Deus'.

How does the scapular look today?

Today the scapular of St Michael consists of two layers of woollen cloth in the shape of a shield. The material comes in two colours, black and navy-blue. The black side has the image of St Michael from the shrine at Monte Sant'Angelo on Mount Gargano, the navy-blue side, the image of Our Lady from Miejsce Piastowe (the motherhouse of the Michaelite Fathers). The ribbons to which the pieces of material are attached are of the same colours as the scapular.

Has the scapular been officially endorsed by the Church?

Yes. The very first scapular of St Michael was approved by Pope Leo XIII in the 19th century. The present-day scapular was approved by the Superior General of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel, Fr Kazimierz Radzik CSMA. Pope Benedict XVI in his letter to the Michaelites, wrote that acceptance of the outward sign of the scapular is to remind the wearer that they experience the effective assistance of a powerful defender, thereby discovering the majesty, goodness and love of God, as well as the fact that there is no greater value, nor any greater good,

above God Himself, the Creator and Lord of all that lives.

What is the symbolic meaning of the scapular?

The section worn on the back signifies an attitude of acceptance of God's Will in bearing the crosses and difficulties of life. The front section of the scapular, worn on the chest, reminds us that our hearts should love God and our neighbour and that we should attempt to free ourselves from earthly attachments, and, through the intercession of St Michael the Archangel, strive to attain eternal goods.

Of what should the wearing of the scapular remind us?

Wearing the scapular should remind us of our Christian duties and of the assurance of St Michael's intercession on our behalf. The scapular expresses our Christian faith that we will meet God in eternity, thanks to the intercession and protection of St Michael the Archangel.

What role does the scapular play?

1. The scapular is a sign of having chosen St Michael the Archangel as our particular protector in the fight against sin and temptation.



2. The scapular is the uniform of the angelic army. In the same way that we recognise a soldier, police officer or priest by their clothing, so we can also recognise the Brotherhood of the scapular by the wearing of this sign.
3. The scapular is a garment and clothing is intended to protect the body. The scapular plays a similar role in the interior life: it protects us from every potential obstacle on the road to salvation, that is, from sin, from Satan and from hell.
4. The wearing of the scapular is a source of grace which assists us in making the sacrifices required to fight sin and to imitate Christ.

What is the purpose of accepting the scapular?

The purpose of accepting the scapular is to honour and venerate St Michael the Archangel, so that, by means of his assistance, we will obtain:

- a) The freedom, protection and growth of the Holy Church;
- b) The grace of a good confession for ourselves and for others, the strength to fight faults, addictions, protection against heresies, errors and false teachings, the strength

to refrain from the use of bad language, blasphemy and from causing offence, as well as the conversion of all sinners.

- c) A spirit of mildness and humility of the heart, as well as an increase in faith, hope and love;
- d) The establishment of the Kingdom of God upon Earth, by means of the powerful intercession of the Queen of the Angels and of the Holy Angels;
- e) The deliverance of souls from purgatory, by means of prayer and the obtaining of indulgences for them;
- f) The grace of a good and holy death.

What is meant by participation in the spiritual goods of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel?

Acceptance of the scapular includes us in the Michaelite family. This is an additional grace granted to those practicing this devotion. Thanks to it, the faithful are granted access to all the spiritual goods of the Congregation, that is, to indulgences, to the merits of canonised and beatified members of the Congregation and to all Holy Masses, prayers, fasts and sacrifices offered-up for the Congregation.

What are the conditions of accepting the scapular?

1. You should accept the scapular from the hands of an accredited priest or deacon.
2. You should wear it continually.
3. You should recite Pope Leo XIII's short prayer of exorcism daily.

Which particular feasts or solemnities should wearers particularly remember?

Wearers of the scapular and those who wish to maintain a spiritual unity with the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel particularly celebrate the following feasts:

- a) The Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael – 29th September;
- b) Blessed Bronisław Markiewicz (the founder of the Congregation) – 30th January;
- c) The Guardian Angels – 2nd October;
- d) The apparitions of St Michael the Archangel on Mount Gargano – 8th May.

Where can I obtain a scapular?

To order – write, phone or email:

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(See page 15 in this issue)

If you have more questions, please email me at lojzito@wp.pl or redakcja.kjb@gmail.com

Fr Rafal Szwajca CSMA, Poland

How long did the cherubs guard the Garden of Eden?

www.commonswikiimedia.org

According to the Book of Genesis, after the expulsion of Adam and Eve, God posted two Cherubs with the flame of a flashing sword in front of the Garden of Eden, to guard it and prevent anyone eating the fruit of the tree of life. For how long did the guards remain at the gates of Eden and what happened to the garden of Paradise afterwards? Was it consumed in the Flood?

The Garden of Eden is regarded by contemporary Biblical scholars as a symbol of primordial harmony with God, who has vanquished human sin. This is, after all, not an entirely new concept. The outstanding Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria (c.25 BCE – c.50CE) regarded the garden granted to Adam and Eve as an allegory of God's relationship and friendship with mankind, the fruit of which was unimaginable happiness and joy. Origen, Ephrem the Syrian and Gregory of Nyssa also endorsed an allegorical interpretation of this Biblical text. They were, however, in the minority, as, up until the modern era, the dominant interpretation was that of the Garden of Eden as a specific place on earth and there are even some contemporary people who regard the existence of a garden

which God had personally planted in the east, and in which He had placed the first humans, to guard and cultivate it, as being entirely real.

Where did God plant His garden?

According to the account given in Genesis, a river flowed from Eden to water the garden, from where it divided to make four streams: Pishon, Gihon, Chiddekel and Perat. The names of these rivers may help us to find Eden's geographical location as Chiddekel and Perat are the ancient names of the Tigris and the Euphrates. According to one theory, these rivers do not correspond to those which exist in Mesopotamia at present, as the Flood had altered the geography of

the region and the present-day rivers adopted their present courses following a quite separate cataclysmic event. The people who survived the Flood may have attributed old place names to new places, rivers and regions.

By identifying Chiddekel and Perat with the Tigris and Euphrates, some have located Eden in Armenia, where the sources of the Tigris and the Euphrates, as well as the rivers Arak and Fasa, flowing through Kolchide, lie. Others locate Eden in Mesopotamia, where the rivers Ulaj (Karun) and Kerka flowed separately into the Persian Gulf. Sources from the neo-Assyrian period mention the country of Bit Adini (Bet Eden in Hebrew) around the middle of the Euphrates, which King Salmanassar III incorporated into Assyria in the year 855BCE. Titus Josephus Flavius equated the river Gichon with the



■ The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise by Benjamin West, 1791.

Ganges (which he considered to be part of the Nile) and the river Pishon with the Indus.

In the interests of tourism, the town of Al-Qurna, which lies at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq, is portrayed as the site of the Biblical Paradise. To tourists, the gigantic jet of natural gas is easily associated, particularly when viewed at night, with the flaming sword of the cherub. However, it is likely that the Biblical writer would have had no intention of giving a precise geographical location for the Garden of Eden, but simply wished to indicate that the cradle of humanity was to be found at the confluence of the largest rivers, in a fertile plateau rich in water.

The Garden of Eden before the Flood

Paradise was a place to which mankind was forbidden access from the moment at which God had posted the two cherubs with the fiery sword at its

entrance. This obviously then gave rise to the question as to its later fate.

It is curious that apocryphal writings describe various attempts to return to Eden. The Gospel of Nicodemus includes, among others, an account of the attempt made by Adam's son, Seth. At the request of his dying father, he was to go to the Garden of Eden in order to obtain a drop of oil from the tree of life, which would restore Adam to health. Seth reached the gates of Paradise, being guarded by St Michael the Archangel, from whom he obtained a branch of the tree of knowledge, or, in another version of the story, seeds.

If, therefore, the Garden of Eden was to be found on Earth, was it not destroyed by the Flood? The Bible does not give us an answer to this question. According to the story by Ove Knusgaard, entitled "Everything has its time", mankind was able to observe two fiery objects rising to heaven shortly before the Flood. These were the two Cherubs, whose duty to guard the gates of the garden was no longer

necessary, as the world was to be overcome by cataclysm. There was, however, a widely-held view in the Middle Ages that God had somehow rescued the garden which He himself had planted.

Did Eden remain on earth after the Flood?

There was a view that the earthly paradise continued to exist on Planet Earth, as following the exile of Adam and Eve, Eden had been surrounded on all sides with a fiery wall, extending up to the heavens, which had apparently halted the Flood (see Isidore of Seville, 'Etymologies'). According to the Venerable Bede, Paradise was separated, either by the ocean or other land mass, from the areas of the earth inhabited by mankind. Gervase of Tilbury added that this uninhabited area is desert, filled with serpents and wild animals.

St Ephrem described Eden as "the mountain of the Lord", higher than the pinnacles of the highest mountains, so that the Flood, which had covered all the high places of the earth, would barely reach its' foothills. Ephrem's views of the Garden of Eden were shared by such Christian writers as Lactantius, Pseudo-Basilus, John Damascene, the Venerable Bede and Peter Lombard. The inspiration for such an idea may well have been the Prophet Ezekiel, who described the garden of God as being surrounded by a wall of precious stones on the holy mountain of God (Ezekiel 28:13-14). Dante later referred to this same vision of Paradise in *The Divine Comedy*. He located the earthly Paradise (which is a beautiful garden) on the summit of a high mountain, while purgatory ▶

► lay at the lower section of the mountain. In “Dittamondo”, the unfinished work of Fazio degli Uberti (d.1368), the earthly Paradise is located on the summit of a high mountain, which reaches the first Heaven, where there is eternal spring. According to Peter Lombard the Flood could not reach the earthly Paradise, as it lay so high that it almost touched the orbit of the Moon. Jehan de Mandeville, living in the 14th century, shared this very same vision.

The belief in the continued earthly existence of Paradise, which had survived the Flood, led obviously to attempts to re-discover it, which were undertaken throughout medieval times up until the dawn of the modern era.

Was the Garden of Eden in the Third Heaven?

There was yet another theory, according to which (prior to the Flood), God had simply removed Paradise from the Earth and had re-located it in heaven. Paradise was, therefore, ‘assumed’ into heaven and so was ‘transfigured’, from its material, earthly existence, into a quite different dimension. The means by which this ‘transfiguration’ was achieved was not taken into consideration, as nothing is impossible to God. In the Judaic tradition, there was even a view that the Garden of Eden (that is, Paradise) had been created even before the creation of the Earth (4 Ezra 7, 26, 33:36, Ap Basyr 51:7-11, 73:1-7) and only later located on Earth, from which it was then removed, when God decided to send the Flood, which would therefore indicate that Paradise was part

of Heaven, only temporarily located within an earthly reality.

The Bible story of the Garden of Eden is symbolic of the fact that we, as human beings, are being called to happiness and immortality, having initially experienced this closeness to God and unity with the whole of creation. Harmony with God had been lost, which is why our redemption was imagined as a re-gaining of Paradise, either on Earth or in heaven. Apocrypha, rabbinical literature and the New Testament all gradually came to view it as the dwelling place of the just after death. This is why the apostle Paul relates that when he “was caught up right into the third heaven” (2 Cor 12:1-4) (he) “was caught up into paradise”, and why Jesus, dying on the Cross, told the good thief that he would be with Him in Paradise (Luke 23:43). The Garden from the Book of Genesis has journeyed far, eventually becoming symbolic of the existence promised to the good thief. The Fathers of the Church stressed the fact that, by means of the Sacrifice of the Son of God, the gates of Paradise once again stand open, and that cherubs with flashing swords are no longer posted in front of them (see Athanasius ‘Expositio fidei’ and John Chrysostom ‘De Cruce et Latrone’). It is John Damascene who puts the following words, addressed to the Good Thief, into the mouth of Jesus: “It was I who exiled [the first parents from Eden]. I myself now lead you back, I who slammed shut the gates of Paradise which were guarded by a flashing, fiery sword. If I myself do not lead you there, the gates will remain shut” (John Damascene “Homily III”). Since the death of Jesus, the gates of Paradise stand open to all, as it is Christ Himself who is the Gate.

Roman Zajac, Poland

Mary’s Song

*Impoverished Mother and Child
they seem – Behold this work of art!
A closer look reveals that Love
Unites them from the start.
True God, true man, her tender Child,
His every breath divine.
In awe she hands Him back to God –
“He is forever Thine.”
In her little Child, the Mother sees
The presence of her Lord.
Her heart meets His in joy and pain.
They sing with one accord.
His life will be a sacrifice
Performed for all the earth.
She knows, and joins her song to His
The moment of His birth.
As He goes forth through
the darkened world
She waits for light to shine.
“All glory and praise be Yours, my Son,
But let Thy pain be mine.”
All mock her Child, His song of love,
“You’ve raised a foolish Son!”
They fail to see God’s mercy
In the work He has begun.
The human form He lives within
Conceals their God and King.
With heavy heart she sighs and sees
The tears their sin will bring.
Each time they strike Him
with their whips
Her Mother’s heart is torn.
She weeps with every stumbling fall,
With every word of scorn.
But what if He chose not to suffer here,
And from the Cross came down?
And so she blesses each piercing nail,
Each thorn within His crown.
“Soon all will be free, my Blessed Child.
From sin You’ll break the strings.”
And as His soul to heaven soars,
Her heart both grieves and sings.*

J.S., USA

Uganda, a country of faith

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA accepted an invitation from Monsignor Magembe from Kampala and Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa from the Diocese of Masaka to visit Uganda speaking on the Divine Mercy, the holy angels and St Michael the Archangel in February 2015.

On the afternoon of his arrival, Fr Silvester arranged for Fr Peter to speak at Our Lady of the Rosary, Narozari Catholic Parish in Masaka district which is located in the western part of the central region of Uganda lying west of Lake Victoria, he spoke on the Divine Mercy and St Michael.

Early next morning of 7th February, Fr Peter gave talks to the congregation of the Marian (Bannabiikira) Sisters at Bwanda, he went on to visit the Bannakaroli Brothers Congregation (BSCL), Kyotera, Masaka with talks on the spiritual life of St Faustina. In the afternoon, the Holy Mass was concelebrated at Kitovu Cathedral with talks on the Knighthood of St Michael the Archangel. Fr Peter was warmly received by all he met and later in the day had a meeting with Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa in Masaka.

On Sunday 8th February, the 8.00 am Holy Mass was concelebrated at the Munyonyo Martyrs shrine with a talk during the homily to the congregation. A second Mass took place at 11.00 am at St Karoli Lwanga Ggaba Parish with talks on the Divine Mercy. At 3.00 pm, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Benediction and veneration



of the relic of St Faustina, with talks on the Divine Mercy and holy angels in the lives of the saints including St Faustina, Padre Pio and John Paul II.

Monday 9th February, Fr Peter went to the Namugongo Shrine, going on to visit to St Mbaaga Seminary giving talks, sharing and explaining with the seminarians the spiritual life of St Faustina.

Tuesday 10th February was one of the highlights of the week with over 4,000 people attending the Eucharistic Shrine, Mount Sion Prayer Center Bukalango, in Kampala. Fr Peter

gave talks on the Knighthood of St Michael the Archangel and teachings on the holy angels, followed by an official enrolment of the Knights of St Michael the Archangel. Monsignor Magembe and the Mt Sion Prayer Centre now wish to support Fr Peter in his mission of spreading the Devotional Knighthood of St Michael the Archangel in Kampala and the surrounding area with the assistance of Jane Tamale the co-ordinator for the event.

Noreen Bavister, England

The Cross

The cross, as the symbol of the Redemption of humanity and occupies first place in the order of importance among the sacramentals of the Catholic Church. It lies at the very essence of Christianity, of faith in the Son of God, who came down from Heaven and gave His life in order to save us and to atone for our sins.

Reminding us of the Sacrifice offered for our sins, the cross has, from earliest Christian times until the present day, been a sign of recognition, and, being rooted in Christ's teaching, is visible in every Catholic Church and in the churches of most Christian denominations.

The significance of this symbol to Christianity can be demonstrated by the fact that those who actively proclaim its antithesis, that is, Satanists and believers in the occult, who reject and deride the Sacrifice of Christ, use as their basic symbol, the inverted 'southern' cross.

In heaven and in the bathhouse

In the early Christian centuries, the Sign of the Cross was frequently made to form part of other symbols, such as the anchor, or was used in monograms, so as not to be immediately identifiable to potential persecutors of the Church. The ending of the era of persecution was itself linked to the sign of the cross, viewed in the sky by Constantine on the day before battle. It was this particular Roman ruler who (in 313 AD), later issued the

Edict of Milan, which ended the era of persecution of Christians within the Empire, allowing complete religious toleration.

Over time, the cross as the symbol of the Redemption, began to appear ever more openly in the public domain, in the decoration of liturgical vestments and on other sacramentals, on graves, churches and in church interiors, particularly upon altars.

At this same period there was an increase in the veneration of alleged relics of the True Cross, sent out throughout the Christian world by the 7th century Byzantine emperor, Heraclius. It was only on the cusp of the 6th and 7th centuries that crosses, which had hitherto simply represented two crossed planks of wood, began to include figures of the crucified Jesus, therefore becoming 'crucifixes'.

Quite apart from the increased significance of the representation of the cross in material form in the development of the Christian Rite, the practice of making the Sign of the Cross with the right hand as a sign of witness to one's faith had also been accepted from the earliest Christian centuries. It was originally made, with three fingers upon the forehead, relating to the three persons

of the Blessed Trinity. Similarly, the present-day practice of making the Sign of the Cross, using all five fingers, relates to the five wounds of Christ.

It is worth citing the words of Tertullian, who wrote of the Sign of the Cross, as follows: "In all our endeavours – when we go in or out, before we enter the bathhouse, dress, when we eat our meals, when we light the lamps in the evening, when we lie down to rest, when we sit down to read, before we begin to carry-out any new activity, we should make the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads".

A road already travelled and laid-out for us by Mary

The devotional practice of making the Way of the Cross is indissolubly linked with the Sign of the Cross. As is the case with the majority of elements within the Christian tradition, the Way of the Cross has its beginnings in the Holy Land and the devotional practices of the crusaders and pilgrims from the 5th century onwards.

According to revelations made to St Brigid, the practice of making 'The Way of the Cross' was started by Our Blessed Mother, who daily walked the Way of the Cross and Passion, praying at points along the road particularly linked to the sufferings of Her Son. There are also narratives which claim that the Apostles did the same.

of Porto Maurizio. It was also at this time that Pope Innocent XI granted indulgences to those making the Way of the Cross. The Franciscan Apostolate of the Way of the Cross continues to be active to this day, encouraging people, and in particular, the elderly, sick and lonely, to daily make this devotion. The apostolate takes as its basis the words of Jesus

now gives to you as a gift from the very depths of His heart. This cross, which he sends you, was encompassed by His all-seeing eyes, conceived by his divine intelligence, tested by his wise justice, warmed by his loving arms, weighed in his own hands, so that it would be neither a centimetre too-long or a gram too heavy. He has blessed it by His Holy Name, anointed it by His grace, filled it with the fragrance of His consolation. He has then taken a last look at you, weighed-up your courage, and has, at last, sent it down from heaven especially for you, as God's particular gift, in His ever-merciful love."

These were the words of St Francis de Sales on the subject of the cross carried by each of us in imitation of the Cross of Christ. Apart from the fact that the cross, as a symbol, reminds us of Christ's passion and death, endured by our Saviour for our redemption, it is also a metaphor for the pain and suffering which God sometimes permits in order for us, in our limited way, to bear a small part in that redemptive suffering.

Let us then remember this when this sign, which brings together and unites millions of the faithful, becomes the object of mockery or of vulgar, pseudo-artistic profanation. May it remain for us a sign of recognition, identifying us as a community of those who have entrusted themselves to Christ, and, filled with gratitude for His Sacrifice, are prepared to have a share in it.

Prepared by **Karol Wojteczek**
based upon 'Handbook of Catholic
Sacramentals' by Ann Ball
and 'Signs of Life' by Scott Hahn



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The devotional practice of the Way of the Cross was, however, not popularised in Europe until the end of the medieval era, particularly due to the effort of the Franciscan Order. It was at this time that Stations of the Cross began to be constructed in European towns and villages, the number of which, curiously, was not always the same. A great effort in propagating the devotion of the Way of the Cross was made by St Leonard

himself: "If anyone wants to be a follower of Mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

No cross is too heavy

"The Eternal God, in his wisdom, had anticipated the cross which He

Land without water

“...my body pines for You like a dry, barren land without water” (Ps 63:1)

Water can be a powerful element, bringing misfortune to people who lose their homes as a result of flooding. It can, as farmers who observe wheat coming up in the spring, also be the source of fertility. It can be something entirely unattainable, as only those without access to water know. But it can also purify, which is the primary significance that it has for Christians.

If we consider the history portrayed in the Old Testament it becomes obvious to us that water is an element which has accompanied man from the very beginning. What is more, it has been there even before the existence of mankind. The point here is not so much to remind ourselves of the happenings recounted in these books of the Old Testament, as to draw our attention to water – to the water which enveloped the earth during the Flood; to that which parted so that the Israelites could cross the Red Sea dry-shod; that with which John the Baptist baptised Jesus and finally to that which flowed from the pierced side of Jesus. There are many more such examples in the Bible that it would not be possible to mention them all.

Our life began in our mother’s womb, in the amniotic sac. Our spiritual life also began with the use of water, this time with the holy water which was sprinkled on our heads by the priest during our baptism and which washed away the mark of original sin. The grace of baptism is renewed each time we put our hands into the holy water font and make

the Sign of the Cross on entering a church.

Washing with water before prayer is a custom which has been followed for centuries. The North African theologian, Tertullian, living on the cusp of the 1st and 2nd centuries, mentions the duty to wash one’s hands before raising them in prayer to God. It was a Jewish custom of which St Paul wrote in his Letter to Timothy: “In every place, then, I want the men to lift their hands up reverently in prayer, with no anger or argument” (1 Timothy 2:8).

The Fathers of the Church taught that, (through the act of) immersing Himself in the waters of the Jordan (at His baptism), Jesus sanctified the waters of the world, which have thereby become a source of purification and renewal. Considering the mystery of water, St Thomas Aquinas perceived in it the grace of the Holy Spirit: “The grace of the Holy Spirit is correctly referred to as living water, as this grace of the Spirit is given to a person in such a way that receive the very source of the grace, that is, the Holy Spirit. (...) For the Holy Spirit is an inexhaustible source, from which

all graces flow” (St Thomas Aquinas, Commentary to the Gospel of John).

Water strengthens and comforts...

Water is present in the liturgy in a multiplicity of ways. From the very earliest times, a few drops have been added to the consecrated wine, which is intended to symbolise the two natures of Jesus (human and divine), unity with the people, as well as the water which flowed from Jesus’ side. The practice of sprinkling the congregation with Holy Water before Mass was already known in the 10th century and was meant to remind them of the grace of baptism. Not long afterwards this custom became accepted by Rome and introduced into the liturgy. In the last analysis, this sprinkling of the congregation on Sundays is a form of penance, as is implied in Psalm 51: “Purify me with hyssop until I am clean; wash me until I am whiter than snow.”

Holy water is ordinary water which has been blessed by the Church. A



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priest may bless water at any time, but a ceremonial blessing of water forms part of the liturgy of the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. The celebrant then lowers the Paschal candle into the water three times, while saying the prayer: “By the power of the Spirit give to the water of this font the grace of your Son.” The Roman rite gives the following prayer for the blessing of the water: “Almighty Lord and God, You are the source and beginning of the life of the body and soul. We ask You to bless this water, to be used for our service, in order to obtain forgiveness of our sins and protection against all sicknesses and snares of the Devil. Lord, in Your mercy, may the source of living water always gush forth for our salvation, that we may draw closer to You, purified internally and avoiding all perils of body and soul.” Once the water has been blessed, the faithful

can then take it home to sprinkle on the sick, on their houses and upon their crops. It is unfortunate that the tradition of placing a holy water font by the door of a house, in order to start the day by making the Sign of the Cross, although encouraged by the Church, is falling out of use.

Living Water

Holy water is also very useful during exorcism. This water, is, however, not the same as the holy water which people can take home from church, but is water over which the rite of exorcism has been performed. It is the opinion of Fr Gabriele Amorth that the pre-Vatican II rite should be used for this purpose, given that, in it, the Church asks God for the water to serve as purification, to cast out evil

spirits by the power of God, for deliverance from impurity, contagion, contaminated air and from all the snares of the enemy. This prayer expresses faith in the power of God’s healing grace, which then extends to everything over which this water is sprinkled. Exorcists have often recalled the great power which lies in the use of holy water, while performing exorcisms. It is worth taking such words to heart, particularly when setting-out on a long journey, but also making use of holy water in times of family argument and of discord between neighbours, when these are seen to be the result of the intervention of the Evil One. St Teresa of Avila said that “there is no more effective way to permanently banish evil spirits than with holy water”.

Joanna Chlopecka, Poland

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Our English speaking guide will be Agnieszka

Day 1 – Arrival into Tel Aviv.

Day 2 – Jerusalem – Mt. Olives, The Ascension Chapel and the churches of the Pater Noster and Dominus Fleuit, Garden of Gethsemane, lunch, Mt. Zion, Wailing Wall, Coenaculum 'upper room of the last supper', the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu. Dinner, overnight stay.

Day 3 – Holy Sepulchre Basilica, Via Dolorosa, lunch, Old City - free time. Dinner, overnight stay.

Day 4 – Journey to Tel Aviv: panoramic view and Jaffa oldest part of the city, then onto Caesarea and Tiberius. Dinner, overnight stay.

Day 5 - Tiberius – boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, Kafarnaum, Tabgha, Jordan river, lunch, Multiplication Church, Mt. Beatitudes. Dinner, overnight stay.

Day 6 Nazareth and Nazareth Village, lunch, Cana, Mt. Tabor, return to Tiberius. Dinner, overnight stay.

Day 7 – Jericho – Mt. Temptation, lunch, Dead Sea, free time, return to Bethlehem. Dinner, overnight stay.

Day 8 - Bethlehem – Nativity Church, Shepherd Fields, lunch, East Jerusalem. Return to Bethlehem. Dinner, overnight stay.

Day 9 – Departure to airport.

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Statue of St Michael in the USA

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA had a fruitful Lenten retreat at St Michael's Parish, Canada followed by a five day mission organised by Fr Andrew Kowalczyk CSMA with the Statue of St Michael the Archangel at St Clare of Montefalco Parish Detroit, MI, USA giving talks on St Michael the Archangel.

In the morning of 14th March 2015 Fr Peter gave talks on Divine Mercy to a well attended group from the Diocese Magnificat Ministry in Orange County, California. The week ended with a five day Divine Mercy



retreat at the Pope John Paul II Polish Centre, Yorba Linda, California.

Fr Peter returned to California for Divine Mercy Sunday giving a week long retreat at St Anthony of Padua Church in Fresno and ended with a full day of prayer and talks on the Devotional Knighthood of St Michael the Archangel at St Louis De Montfort RC Church in Santa Maria.

We thank everyone for their time, organisational skills and enthusiasm in helping to arrange these missions.

Noreen Bavsiter, England

St Michael, my friend

Having finished secondary school I was glad to have four-month holiday break. But because my parents were unable to sponsor my studies I planned to earn some money. Full of enthusiasm I soon found a job. However, God had different plans. On falling asleep one evening I got an invitation.

It was not any material thing that I could show to you. It was an image which appeared in my mind: I saw a triangular rock, in the middle of which was a narrow black crevice. I connected this image to the St Michael medallion I received from a friend of my mother who had visited Italy some time ago. "I'd like to go there, too." I thought just before I fell asleep.

"So go!" said my mum next day when I told her about my experience.

"Easier said than done." I said. "How will I get the money?" I did not share her joy, but she went ahead and called to Italy to reserve a bed in the Pilgrims' House at Monte San Angelo, the Shrine of St Michael the Archangel.

Ten minutes later I had a ticket to Rome booked and a plan for the trip to Monte San Angelo worked out.

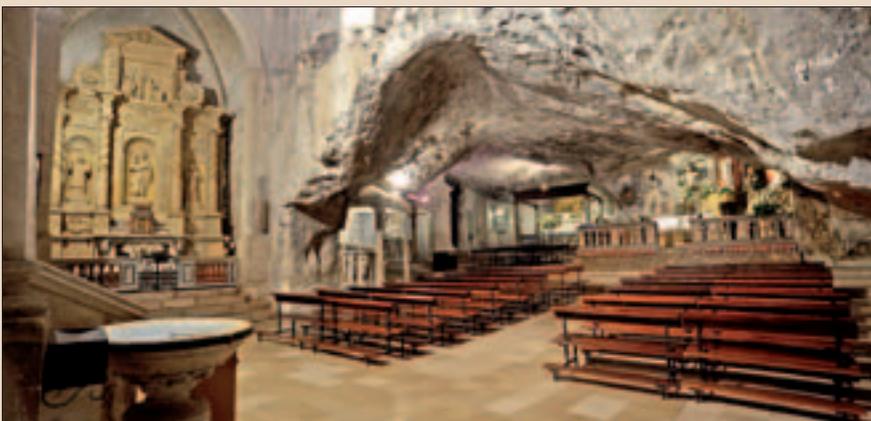
I did not believe that I would go because the wage in my part-time job was insufficient; I also knew that my parents were really unable to help either. However, God took care of the financial part of the trip: I got a better-paid job! Not only could I now afford to go abroad but I also had money to study! I was extremely happy! In the meantime, while playing basketball I fell and suffered an injury to my head. I felt so dizzy for a few days that the idea of going to Italy faded away. "No, I'm not going to give up! I'm going to Italy!" I said obstinately; my mum asked her

friends to pray and I soon recovered. I found some information about Monte San' Angelo on the Internet; a satellite picture of the place looked exactly like the rock from my vision!

Approaching St Michael's sanctuary I felt like a tourist but I soon discovered the uncanny atmosphere of the place: pilgrims singing and an incredible power around. It is impossible to put into words, but it is something everyone should experience. I started and finished each day in the cavern talking with pilgrims for hours ... and I was sure that someone listened to me. My prayers and requests were heard and granted almost immediately. Although I was alone in a foreign country, St Michael took care of me via the good people I met. I could write a book about the graces I was given! I regained peace of heart and happiness; now I enjoy each day in my life; I've stopped worrying about my future.

I would like to thank all those in Poland and Italy, who gave me "pieces of heaven" on the trip.

Justyna, Poland



USA**31st July – 2nd August 2015****Divine Mercy Conference:
Jesus Christ Son of God**

Pikes Peak Center
190 S. Cascade Ave,
Colorado Springs, CO. 80903
Contact: Therese Lorentz
Phone: + 001-719-598-7385
Email: thereselorentz@aol.com
www.stthomasaquinasociety.org

IRELAND**6th May 2015, 7.30pm Holy Mass
Divine Mercy and The Knighthood
of St Michael the Archangel**

St Nail's Church,
38 Main Street,
Lismonaghan, Kinawley,
Co Fermanagh BT92 3FJ
Contact: Fr Gabriel Kelly
Phone: +44 (0) 48- 6634- 8250
Website: www.sldm.org

**7th May 2015, 7.30pm Holy Mass
Divine Mercy and The Knighthood
of St Michael the Archangel**

Christ the King Church
Strathroy, Omagh, Co Tyrone
Northern Ireland BT79 7DW
Contact: Marie Martin
Phone: +44 (0) 7799-112-224
Email: mgmartin204@gmail

8th May 2015**2.00 – 5.00pm****2.00pm Holy Mass****Divine Mercy
and The Knighthood of St Michael**

Rosa Mystica, Glenleighan,
Fintown, Co Donegal.
Contact: Mary Doogan
Phone: +44 (0) 7854-387-409
Email: marytdoogan@yahoo.co.uk

9th May 2015, 11.30am**Procession into the church behind
the statue of St Michael the Archangel****12:00pm Holy Mass****The Knighthood of St Michael**

St Columba RC Church
Longtower Street, Londonderry

Northern Ireland. BT48 6QQ

Contact: Jim Crossan

Phone: + 44-7790-038-313

Email: jacrossan28@hotmail.com

12th May 2015, 7.00pm**The Knighthood of St Michael
the Archangel**

Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Prayer group,
Finney, Clonbur, Galway,
Contact: Breda Laffey
Phone: +353 (94) 954-8115

14th May 2015, 7.30pm Mass**Talks on Divine Mercy
and St Michael the Archangel**

Church of the Immaculate Conception
Church Rd, Mitchelstown
Co. Cork. Ireland
Contact: Rev. Fr Michael Fitzgerald PP
Phone: +353 (0) 25-840-90
Parish office: + 353 (0) 25-84-062
Email:
mitchelstownparishoffice@eircom.net

15th – 17th May 2015**7.30pm Holy Mass****Divine Mercy and Holy Angels Retreat**

Pallotine College Chapel
Kickham Street, Thurles.
Co Tipperary. Ireland
Contact: Fr Emmet O'Hara
Phone: +353-504-21202
Email: emmet.ohara9@gmail.com
www.thurlesparish.ie

WALES**22nd – 24th May 2015****Talks: Advanced Divine Mercy Retreat**

Franciscan Friary
Monastery Road, Pantasaph
Holywell, Flintshire CH8 8PE
Contact: Br Loarne Ferguson
Phone: office +44 (0) 1352-711-053

16th – 18th October 2015**Talks: Holy Angels retreat**

Franciscan Friary
Monastery Road, Pantasaph
Holywell, Flintshire CH8 8PE
Contact: Br Loarne Ferguson
Phone: office +44 (0) 1352-711-053

SCOTLAND**17th – 19th July 2015****Talks: Living in the presence
of the angels**

Craig Lodge, Dalmally
Argyll. PA33 1AR
Phone: +44 (0) 4838-200-216
Email: mail@craiglodge.org
www.craiglodge.org

13th – 15th November 2015**Talks: The mystery of the diary
of St Faustina**

Craig Lodge, Dalmally
Argyll. PA33 1AR
Phone: +44 (0) 4838-200-216
Email: mail@craiglodge.org
www.craiglodge.org

SCOTLAND \ PAISLEY**24th October 2015****9:00am – 5:00pm****Holy Mass 4:00pm****Divine Mercy Conference**

Turnbull Hall,
Glasgow University
Catholic Chaplaincy,
13-15 Southpark Terrace,
Glasgow, G12 8LG.
Contact: Helen Boarder
Email: Helen.Border@glasgow.ac.uk

25th October 2015**Holy Mass 11:40 am****Holy Hour 5:00 pm****Talk: Divine Mercy**

Holy Cross Church,
Constarry Road,
Croy. Kilsyth,
Glasgow, G65 9JG
Contact: Fr Joseph Sullivan
Phone: +44 (0) 123- 6822 – 148

SPAIN**3th – 8th November 2015****Divine Mercy Mission**

Divine Mercy Shrine
Peublo Neuvo de Guadiaro, Spain
Contact: Denise Fitzpatrick
Phone: +34 600-245-521
Email: denisecannes@hotmail.co.uk

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Sonia Starc
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Phone: +61-413-314-718

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Near traffic roundabout
Medjugorje, Bosnia and Hercegovina
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Email: mariana.dugandzic@gmail.com
Phone: +387-63-403-614

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Derry BT48 6DW.
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Phone: +44 28-7126-6888

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Lanarkshire ML1 5AL
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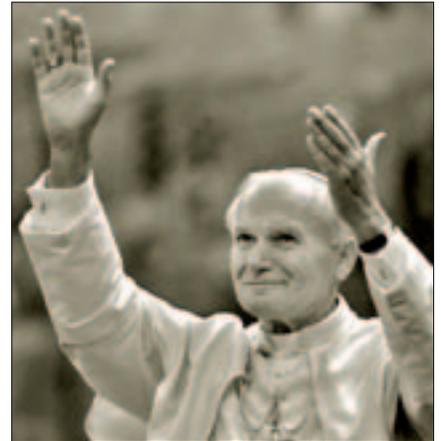
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The Angels await the declaration of war

The battle with the Evil One, so characteristically portrayed in the figure of St Michael the Archangel (with Satan under his feet) is also relevant today, as the Evil One is alive and actively at work in the world. The Archangel Michael stands shoulder to shoulder with the Church in this battle, in order to shield it from the perversities of this world, assisting the faithful in repelling Satan.

Let us remember that the angels wish to stand with us, both in the life of the world, as well as beside each individual person, in the battle with Satan and his armies. The strength of their army surpasses that of the Evil One. There is, however, one difficulty: they await a declaration of war. They are the Knights of God. And so, (because they respect our right of free will) they also await an official invitation from each human person.

Pope John Paul II

in the shrine of Saint Michael the Archangel,
Monte Sant'Angelo, 24 May 1987.

Chief Editor: 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 Marys 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 Marys)

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 Marys)

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 Marys)

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 Marys)

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 Marys)

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 Marys)

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 Marys)

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 Marys)

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.