



# The Angels

Messengers from a loving God



Pilgrim statue  
in Scotland

Why Mary  
was truly blessed

The God of both  
justice and mercy

Wait upon  
the Lord

St Michael's  
call to men

I want  
that statue!

# St Michael the great Prince

Our founder, Blessed Fr Bronisław Markiewicz wrote, "After the Lord Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Michael is the greatest benefactor of humanity and he is a guide for the erring, consolation and comfort for the fallen, protector for distressed souls, a brave slayer of hellish spirits and corrupters on earth. He is the guardian and friend of people coming down from this world and even after leaving this earth."

After the victorious test, St Michael obtained a greater grace than before: he shone with an unexpected spiritual radiance, becoming the most beautiful, the most powerful and pre-eminent among all the angelic hosts.

The holiness of St Michael during the battle with proud Lucifer was unsurpassed and remains unsurpassed. Only the Queen of the Angels, the Blessed Virgin Mary alone surpasses him in holiness. These are very important, – the most beautiful, most powerful, and second only to the Mother of God. He has the second place in heaven. He is the commander of the angels. Our Lady is his queen and queen of all the angels.



Who is the Archangel Michael? Although he is a mysterious being, we can find some details of his character by the titles he is given in the litany: Filled with the wisdom of God; Most Powerful Prince of the armies of the Lord; Standard bearer of the Most Holy Trinity; Light of Angels; Splendour and Fortress of the Church Militant; Honour and Joy of the Church Triumphant.

We then discover his role as an intercessor: Bulwark of orthodox believers; Strength of those who fight under the banner of the Cross; Light and confidence of souls at the hour of death; Our most sure aid; Our Prince and Our Advocate. Such are the functions St Michael has and fulfils with great power.

I assure you of the constant daily prayers of the priests of the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel for all our readers and their families.

God bless you.

Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA  
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## The Angels

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# Why Mary was truly blessed

**The feasts, kosher rules and everyday regulations of Jewish life were included in the 'law' which St Paul describes as a kind of 'saviour' that kept people close to God.**

**B**ut as he says in the following reading we come close to God and share His life, not through the regulations of Jewish life but through faith in Jesus Christ; *"As it is, scripture makes no exception when it says that sin is master everywhere; so the promise can be given only by faith in Jesus Christ to those who have this faith. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the Law, locked up to wait for the faith which would eventually be revealed to us. So the Law was serving as a slave to look after us, to lead us to Christ, so that we could be justified by faith. But now that faith has come we are no longer under a slave looking after us; for all of you are the children of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus, since every one of you that has been baptised has been clothed in Christ.*

*"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither slave nor freeman, there can be neither male nor female -- for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And simply by being Christ's, you are that progeny of Abraham, the heirs named in the promise"* (Gal 3: 22-29).

The very righteousness of Christ can be ours through our faith and Baptism into Him. Through the sacraments we become part of Christ and of His Mystical Body.

Furthermore, St Paul continues, now we all have access to the spiritual

dignity and eternal life of a child of God through Christ.

There are no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female distinctions in our spiritual potential and inheritance. These distinctions no longer count because the path to life on Earth is now open to everyone who believes in Christ. The very first believer in Christ was Mary.

One day, after Jesus had been driving out demons, debating with Pharisees and teaching increasingly large crowds, a woman called out, "Blessed is the womb that bore You!" You can almost hear this woman going on to say she must have been a lucky mother to have such a son! But in Jesus' scheme of things the truly blessed are those who "hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28).

Far from turning attention away from His mother, Jesus was showing that she was not just some lucky girl who received special graces, but she was truly blessed because His mother constantly chose to live her life in obedience to God. Her cousin Elizabeth could see Mary's faith and obedience, and this was why she called her blessed. Elizabeth said, "Blessed is she who believed that what was told her by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Luke 1:45).

To Gabriel, Mary said, "Let it be done to me according to Your word." Consider

the consequences of Mary's 'yes' to the angel's extraordinary message. Imagine you are a young girl engaged to be married and now you are willing to accept God's will to become miraculously pregnant before you and your husband have come together. This might be a little difficult to explain to your fiancé, not to mention the town gossips! Would you not want to suggest that God delay the miracle until after the marriage? Did she really have to risk being stoned to death for the sin of adultery?

Mary's act of faith and obedience is extraordinary. She deserves to be called the 'New Eve' for she trusted, believed and obeyed God's will. This is the woman Jesus knew as His mother. He saw her blessedness in her wisdom, strength, faith and obedience. We too can be blessed if we seek to hear the Lord and put His words into practice.

Heavenly Father, let us know even now the life You desire to pour out from on high. Let us live the life of the Spirit, filling us with the virtues of Christ: humility, simplicity, meekness and obedience. Give us a taste of what will be fully ours at the end of time.

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# The God of Both Justice and Mercy

**In the previous article Dr Robert Stackpole presented St Augustine's teaching on our Merciful Lord. This time he explains how God may be just and merciful at the same time.**

St Augustine tells us in his *Enchiridion* that God's mercy is expressed especially in the practice of penance (section 65): *But we should not despair of God's mercy for the forgiveness of actual crimes, however great, in the holy Church for those who do penance, each in a way appropriate to his sin. But in works of penance, when a sin has been committed of such a kind that he who committed it is also cut off from the Body of Christ, time should not be measured so much as sorrow, since God does not despise a broken and contrite heart.*

He continues in the same work (section 82): *Penance itself, when there is a good reason for doing it according to the custom of the Church, is often neglected because of weakness, for shame brings with it a fear of being ill thought of when we care more for the good opinion of others than for the righteousness that leads a person to humiliate himself in penance. So we need God's mercy not only when we do penance, but in order to do penance.*

In fact, Augustine writes, forgiveness of sins is so readily available in the Church that the only unforgivable sin "the sin against the Holy Spirit" is not to believe that sins are forgiven in the Church (section 83).

## Disappointing on pre-destination

The most disappointing aspect of St Augustine's treatment of Divine Mercy comes in his discussion of pre-destination. St Paul says in Romans that God's will is to "have mercy on all" (Rom. 11:32), and in his first epistle to Timothy he writes: "His will is for all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." It is hard to see how this Scriptural teaching about God's offer of mercy to 'all' fits with what St Augustine writes in his *Enchiridion* (sections 107, 98, and 102): *God makes out of the mass of perdition [that is, out of fallen humanity] that has flowed from [Adam's stock] some vessels of honour and some of dishonour; the vessels of honour he makes through his mercy, those of dishonour through his justice, so that nobody may boast of humanity and consequently nobody may boast of himself. ...That is, he has mercy in his great generosity, and he hardens the heart without any unfairness, so that one who has been set free should not boast of his merits, nor should one who has been damned complain, except of his lack of merits. For grace alone distinguishes the*

*redeemed from the lost, who have been formed into one mass of perdition by a cause common to all from which they draw from their origin. ...So, almighty God either in his mercy shows mercy to whom he will or through justice hardens whom he will, and never does anything unfairly or unwillingly, and does everything that he wills.*

The underlying thought here is that God wills to have mercy on some sinners, but not on all of them. Original and actual sin has left all people worthy only of damnation. By His eternal decree, however, and as an act of sheer mercy, God has elected some sinners to be the objects of His mercy, objects of His (evidently irresistible) saving grace, while others His mercy has simply passed by: they are treated solely as objects of His justice, for he leaves them wallowing in sin and its consequences. They have no right to complain, however, because they are only receiving what they deserve.

## Mercy for all

What has happened here is that St Augustine has treated God's justice and God's mercy as alternatives, as two distinct "sides" of God's nature,



so to speak. Some sinners encounter His mercy side, and some sinners encounter only his justice side. Yet it is not at all clear how God could be said to will the gift of mercy for “all” (Rom. 11:32) or will “all to be saved” (I Tim. 2:4). As St Paul clearly taught, if God in fact bestows His mercy only on some, others are completely passed by. The damned may indeed only receive in the end what they truly deserve, but how can God be said to desire to have mercy on all if He never gave to them, at some point in their lives, grace sufficient for them to be saved, if only they would have received it?

This, of course, brings us to the centuries-long conflict between the Jesuits and the Dominicans (and in another way, in the Protestant world, between the Arminians and the Calvinists) regarding the whole doctrine of pre-destination. We certainly do not have the space to unfold that theological controversy here. Suffice it to say that the Dominicans generally held to the view of St Augustine (with some clarifications, in an attempt to preserve the free consent of the human soul to saving grace), while the Jesuits objected to their formulation of the doctrine. Both points

of view are permissible within the Catholic Church, according to the magisterium. Quite apart from the technicalities of that debate, however, is the danger of seeing God’s justice and mercy as alternative ways in which He relates to His creatures “opposite” sides of his “character”, so to speak.

## Heal, not punish

A surface reading of St Maria Faustina Kowalska’s Diary also might lead us to believe in this two-sided God. For example, St Faustina heard Jesus say that those who run away from His merciful Heart will fall into the hands of His justice (entry 1728) and with regard to purgatory, our Lord told her, “My mercy does not want this, but justice demands it” (entry 20).

On the other hand, there are plenty of passages in her Diary where she records Jesus’ words of comfort, words that show He is reluctant to punish sinners, tempers his justice with mercy, and withholds the full rigor of His justice until the Judgement Day, giving humanity the maximum opportunity for repentance (entries 848, 1160). One of the

most poignant of these passages is Diary entry 1588. Jesus said to her: *I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to My Merciful Heart. I use punishment when they themselves force Me to do so; My hand is reluctant to take hold of the sword of justice.*

Passages such as these suggest that our experience of the rigors of divine justice is largely self-inflicted, just as a man who leaves the warmth of a fire grows cold through no fault of the fire itself. In Diary entry 1728, Jesus said to St Faustina that when sinful souls “bring all My graces to naught, I begin to be angry with them, leaving them alone and giving them what they want.”

In the Church today, much of liberal, “progressive” theology denies the justice (in the sense of the commutative or penal justice) of God. Thus, there is no hell, no purgatorial punishment, nor does God ever chastise anyone in this life, nor is anything owed to God on the scales of justice because of our sins. It follows that Jesus may have done great things for us, but he did not need to die for our sins in the sense of making “satisfaction” for them, or paying the penalty for them on our behalf.

On the other hand, much of “conservative”, or traditionalist Catholicism falls into the trap of seeing God’s mercy and justice as two distinct sides of His nature much as the later Augustine did. The trick is to activate or respond to His good side, and avoid His bad side!

## Theological struggle

Some of the greatest saints and theologians in the Catholic tradition,



however, have struggled to find a way to fuse together, in a single vision, the justice and mercy of God, without denying either one. How God's justice and mercy are one in the absolute simplicity of the infinite divine nature is, of course, a mystery that we can never completely fathom in this life. It is beyond our capacity as finite minds, and as fallen creatures, fully to comprehend. But even in this life we can begin to see that God's justice, "His occasional chastisements of us in this life, and His purgatorial punishments of us in the next", are also, at one and the same time, expressions of His mercy toward us.

Even more difficult to fathom, however, is how the final damnation of a soul is also, in another way, God's final act of mercy toward that soul! And yet we can know, right from the start, that it must be so: Philosophy shows us that God's nature is absolutely simple and indivisible, so that His justice must always be an expression of His mercy; moreover, the Psalms clearly say that God's mercy is over all His works (Ps. 145:9), and that all His ways are merciful (Ps. 25:10). Most of all, the Cross of Jesus Christ, as Pope St John Paul II clearly taught, is the supreme exposition of both the mercy and the justice of God, at one and the same time (Dives in Misericordia, V.7 and V.8).

**Dr Robert Stackpole**

Director of the John Paul II

Institute of Divine Mercy,

an apostolate of the Marian Fathers  
of the Immaculate Conception

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# Sharbel Makhlouf: eager to work miracles

**What God will perform after his death will be sufficient proof of his exemplary behaviour in the observance of his vows, to a degree such that we can say that his obedience was angelic, not human.**

**S**t Sharbel was born in Bekaa Kafra on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1828. Bekaa Kafra is a small mountain village, the highest in Lebanon and the Middle East, 5,118 feet (1,560 metres) above sea level, in the region of Bsharri (North Lebanon, called in Lebanese, 'the Cedars of God').

Bekaa Kafra overlooks the valley of Qadeesha, where Sharbel had two uncles living as monks in the monastery of St Anthony of Kozhayah. They were a source of inspiration and models for him.

He was baptised on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1828 with the name of Youssef Antoun Makhouf. He was the fifth child in a poor, yet respectable and devout family, having two older brothers and two older sisters.

His father died 8<sup>th</sup> August 1828 as he was returning home after compulsory enlistment in the

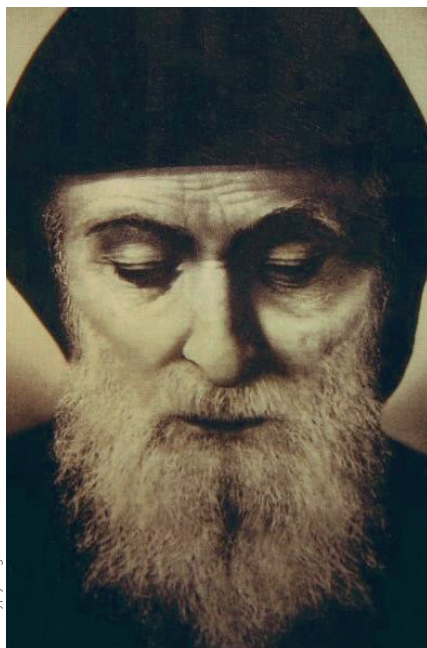
Turkish Army under the Ottoman rule of Lebanon.

Along with other children, Youssef learned Arabic and Syriac from the priest of the village.

## Very pious

Youssef was very pious, so much so that his fellow villagers used to call him 'the Saint'. Daily he used to take his small herd to the field where he would let them graze while he went to a nearby grotto to fall into deep prayer in front of an icon of the Virgin Mary. This grotto became his altar and his first hermitage.

In 1851, at the age of 23, he left his family and village to start his first year of novitiate in the monastery of Mayfouk. He chose the name 'Sharbel' in honour of



■ St Sharbel before 1898

a second century martyr in the Antiochene Church.

In 1852, he moved to the monastery of Annaya for his second year of novitiate. There on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1853, he professed his monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

He received his formation in theology at the monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justina in Kfifan between the years 1853-1859. Father Nemtallah Kassab El-Hardini (canonised on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2004) was the teacher of St Sharbel and his fellow seminarians.

## A model of self-sacrifice and unwavering obedience

On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1859, St Sharbel was ordained a priest of the Lebanese

Maronite Order. He spent 16 years (1859-1875) in the monastery of Annaya, praying and working in the fields with his brother monks. He was unhesitatingly obedient to his superiors, faithfully observed all the rules, and lived a life of sacrifice under austere conditions.

His request to move to the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul, on a nearby hill, was approved after his superior witnessed the 'miracle of the lamp'. One night, St Sharbel asked a worker at the monastery to refill the oil lamp that he was using. Although the lamp worker filled it with water instead of oil, the lamp still gave light and kept burning throughout the night.

## The saint inebriated with God

15<sup>th</sup> February 1873, marked the first day of his life in the hermitage. There, he continued to live for 23 years. He spent his time in prayer, contemplation and worship, as well as in diligent manual labour in the fields and vineyards. He was a model of self-sacrifice and total detachment from the world. St Sharbel reflected the grace and strength that God had granted him through living the monastic virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience. He never left the hermitage except by request of his superiors who would ask him to go out to heal the sick. He followed the path of the hermit fathers by kneeling austere before Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, praying quietly to Him, and immersing

himself in Jesus throughout the night. He came to be known as 'the saint inebriated with God'. During his life, St Sharbel not only healed people from physical disease, but also from spiritual ones, even casting out demons.

While celebrating the Divine Liturgy on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1898, he suffered a stroke and endured eight days of terrible pain calmly, silently and prayerfully. St Sharbel kept repeating the prayer he could not finish in the Divine Liturgy: "Father if truth, behold your Son, the sacrifice in whom you are well pleased. Accept him who died for me....". He would also repeat the names of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, as well as Sts Peter and Paul, the patron saints of the hermitage. He died on Christmas Eve, 1898 and was buried at the monastery on a very cold and snowy day. Only a few monks were able to attend his burial ceremony.

## His obedience was angelic, not human

St Sharbel's superior, Father Antonios Mishimshany wrote about him in the monastery's records of the dead: "On the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the month December 1898, Father Sharbel, the hermit of Bekaa Kafra, died after suffering a stroke and receiving the Sacraments of the dying. He was buried in the monastery's cemetery. He was sixty-eight years old. Father Antonios Mishimshany was the superior of the monastery. What God will perform after his death will be

sufficient proof of his exemplary behaviour in the observance of his vows, to a degree such that we can say that his obedience was angelic, not human.”

## His life after death

Following his death, people started to report seeing lights around his tomb. When Church authorities opened the tomb, they found St Sharbel body incorrupt and exuding sweat and blood.

On 15<sup>th</sup> April 1899, the Maronite Patriarch allowed the body to be transferred to a special coffin, which was placed in a new tomb and praying for his intercession. God granted many of them physical healings and spiritual blessings.

St Sharbel's cause was officially presented to Pope Pius XI on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1925.

Because of the exuding of sweat and blood, St Sharbel's coffin and tomb had to be changed several times through the years. On 24<sup>th</sup> July 1927, the body was transferred to a third tomb.

In 1950, St Sharbel's tomb was opened in the presence of certified doctors and members of an official committee from the Church and the Lebanese's government, who verified the integrity of the body. They wrote a medical report and put it in a box inside the coffin. Immediately, healings proliferated in an amazing fashion! Tens of thousands of pilgrims flocked to the monastery of Annaya, asking the intercession of the holy hermit. St Sharbel's body continued to bleed and perspire for sixty-five years after his death.

## Beatification of Sharbel

Pope Pius XII approved the decree recognising the heroic virtues of the future saint on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1954. His Holiness Pope Paul VI presided on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1965 over the beatification ceremony of St Sharbel in the Vatican at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. The decision for the beatification of St Sharbel was based on two miracles.

The miraculous healing of Sister Maria Abel Kamari, S.S.C.C. from gastric ulcer on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1950. Sister Kamari suffered from liver, gall bladder and kidney dysfunction. Her intestines were also stuck together. She would vomit most of her food with blood. Her right hand became paralyzed and she needed help to walk. Three times, she was on the brink of death.

The miraculous healing, near the end of 1950, of Mr Alessandro Obeid, who regained sight in his right eye, which had been blinded in an accident in 1937.

## Canonisation of Sharbel

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 1977, his Holiness Pope Paul VI presided over the canonisation ceremony of Blessed Sharbel in the Vatican Basilica. The miraculous healing of Miriam Awad from throat cancer in 1967 was accepted as the official miracle for canonisation.

**Noreen Bavister, U.K**  
[www.familyofsaintsharbel.org](http://www.familyofsaintsharbel.org)



**Q: How did you come to assist Mary Doogan, the main coordinator of the visitation of the statue of St Michael in Scotland?**

**Maria:** Because I have always felt close to St Michael and it is truly an honour to help. We all feel humbled to be a part of a team developing around the project of St Michael's Scottish tour.

**John:** Fr Eugenio Montesi SX suggested to Mary Doogan she should contact the Knights of St Columba.

**Mary:** This particular pilgrim statue was offered to me by Noreen Bavister, in February 2022 to go throughout Scotland.

Following on from the terrible era of Covid restrictions and lockdowns, I felt a strong desire to encourage practising Catholics to seek the help and intercession of St Michael the Archangel in what felt more of a spiritual than human battle in what was then happening throughout our world.

How else was one to view the world-wide closures of churches and



# Devotion to St Michael has been ignited and reignited in Scotland

**One of the most encouraging fruits has been in the number of young children exposed to the devotion of St Michael and their guardian angels.**

the deprivation of access to the holy sacraments at such a critical point of time in human history other than spiritual in origin?

Noreen initially suggested we could have this newly commissioned one for a two-month period. Frankly I was stunned - "What am I going to do with the statue for two months?" The parish priest, Fr Dominic Towey, of St John the Baptist had retired and moved to St Augustine's parish, Coatbridge.

My mind was racing but not enough for me to decline the offer of the statue's visit. It would work itself out! And it did.

Fr Michael Kane, parish priest of St Augustine's accepted the offer of launching the inauguration of this newly commissioned St Michael's pilgrim statue for one week which was solemnly blessed by Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA at a special mass on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

**Q: Let's have a glimpse behind the scenes: what did the organisation look like? Lots of phone calls, schedules...**

**Maria:** Our coordinator Mary Doogan an excellent organiser deals with all the phone calls, planning the schedules and transportation of the statue. Great volunteers came forward to help. The St Michael sacramentals delivered to each parish by Patricia Whitehouse who attends to their preparation including books and The Angels magazine. Kenny, St Augustine's joiner, made the stretch-er that is now used to transport the statue from parish to parish, including the box that can house the statue.

A local firm 'Peter's removal van' along with partner Craig accepted the task and have been faithful and reliable in transferring St Michael around Scotland every Wednesday ever since. Grace McBride another prayer warrior assists in escorting the transfers if Mary or myself were unable to do this.

Prayer is paramount to the success of St Michael's tour and it is something we actively engage in. While we travel together with joy in our hearts we fast, pray the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Chaplet to St Michael and prayers to our guardian angels en route to the next venue.

**John:** As the Provincial Grand Knight of St Columba Province 1 Glasgow, I have been assisting along with other fellow Knights, in escorting weekly the statue and processing into every receiving church. This has added to the solemnity of such a visit and a very moving sight to witness.

**Mary:** This was all new for Scotland. Because of Fr Peter Prusakiewicz's extensive knowledge with the pilgrim statue of St Michael we were sent his regular format. Starting with Holy Mass, homily followed by Eucharistic Adoration, hymns, St Michael Novena, Litany, Chaplet to St Michael, Pope Leo XIII's short exorcism prayer, investiture of the Scapular of St Michael and more which was a helpful starting point.

After Easter time, 2022, I made enquiries of a few various priest friends I know if a church visit of the St Michael pilgrim statue would be something they would like to have. They all accepted and so began the program of booking in a weekly visit to individual parishes mostly located in the central belt of Scotland.

It didn't take long to recognise the popularity that such a visit was generating among different clergy and parishioners and without too much effort the two months allocation was fully booked up. A two-month schedule keeping locations reasonably close to one another has proven the most effective and manageable approach to take.

### **Q: How did people respond to St Michael's visit?**

**Maria:** They are delighted St Michael has come to Scotland. Prayer petitions are something we have encouraged and are used extensively by adults and young alike, taking this opportunity to handwrite their prayer requests asking St Michael to intercede before God. Some people now have renewed devotion to the archangel and are taking this opportunity to follow the statue from parish to parish in Scotland, some a considerable distance to receive a blessing.

**John:** Incredible and a few people shed tears of joy. They came forward in awe and respectful silence to greet St Michael, leaving their petitions in the box at the foot of the statue. A good number of people came daily throughout the week. This mission has awakened people to St Michael and many went home with pictures, books and medals of St Michael. The power and prayer I have witnessed is truly powerful and magnificent.

**Mary:** Parishioners are very excited to have a visit of St Michael's beautiful statue and are oftentimes amazed at how commanding and majestic a presence he exudes.

On quite a few occasions parishioners and clergy have expressed real sadness when the statue is removed for transfer elsewhere with their reporting the feeling of losing a loved one.

There is also a pattern by some of following the statue to other locations such is the bond that has developed with St Michael during his visit.

Unquestionably, devotion to St Michael has been ignited and reignited with this visit. The increased sense of protection that such devotion affords is palpable and has been reported upon throughout the tour. Many are now committing to praying regularly the chaplet, novena and prayers of St Michael. In a number of churches, the Pope Leo XIII's short exorcism prayer of protection to St Michael has been reinstated being offered at the end of Holy Mass.

### **Q: What was the role of the parish priests?**

**Maria:** Parish priests have embraced this opportunity to receive the pilgrim statue of St Michael the Archangel. Priests and deacons gave excellent homilies and talks on the subject of St Michael and the angels. Priests have prepared the people very well in advance, starting with a novena, and the other prayers mentioned above before the arrival of St Michael each Wednesday.

**John:** Priests say with joy 'I want that statue and the prayers to St Michael!' They are thrilled that the statue is coming to their church and very much involving schools. The priest and teachers prepare the people and children well and in good time before St Michael arrives. School children are becoming aware of St Michael and the angels, learning the novena and the other prayers to the archangel. After Mass everyone in the church comes forward to pray, touch the arm or feet of the pilgrim statue.

**Mary:** Even when a parish priest has not been the most enthusiastic about a visit, by the end of the week it is



■ John O'Donnell, the Provincial Grand Knight of St Columba, Glasgow, Scotland



■ Maria Glen, Mary Doogan and Fr Joseph Emeka Uwah, St Robert Bellarmine's Church, Glasgow, Scotland

evident and often reported that St Michael has touched many hearts.

Clergy, including priests and deacons are very keen and warm, preparing novenas, chaplets, 40-hour services, etc for the week.

#### **Q: Were children invited to meet St Michael?**

**Maria:** School children have responded particularly well coming with their school friends and teachers during the mornings. Their love for the archangel was evident with their desire to learn St Michael prayers and throng around the pilgrim statue. Parents were happy to take photographs as a happy memory of the day.

**John:** This tour of Scotland is giving children knowledge and a great awareness. Wonderful to see children, teachers and helpers who had walked from one school to Johnston church to visit and pray to St Michael. They waited in joyful anticipation as one of the children placed the crown on the head of St Michael when he arrived at the altar. One night that will forever live in the hearts of the children and parishioners from St Dominic's Church, Bishopbriggs in

November was children making their confirmation and witnessed in awe the procession carrying St Michael onto the altar followed by the priests, deacon with our new Archbishop William Nolan in attendance.

**Mary:** One of the most encouraging fruits has been in the number of young children exposed to the devotion of St Michael and their guardian angels. Many clergy have arranged visits to church of local school children who are always enthusiastic in learning about the angels and the protection they afford every person. Oftentimes the children have been guided to learn more about the angels prior to any visit and can reveal a heavenly truth in responses they sometimes have given during exchanges with staff and clergy alike.

#### **Q: Did people get graces that you can share with us? Healings or problem solving...**

**Maria:** People have said in the presence of the holy statue of St Michael they can feel the Holy Spirit in the church and the graces received through their prayer and intercession to St Michael.

**John:** The amount of people coming to see St Michael is phenomenal. It is he who is the attraction, St Michael is bringing people back to the Church, giving people with so many worries, hope. When St Michael touches hearts he enters into you and has a powerful impact on lives, including mine.

**Mary:** Many parishioners have reported on the great sense of peace and comfort the visit of St Michael has produced along with the loss of fear and anxiety.

Others report on the awareness of a very holy presence during the various services held. Others have reported on experiencing peace especially over family divisions that have eluded them for years.

#### **Q: Why do you do all this? You could sit in your armchair and read or watch TV instead of working so hard...**

**Maria:** I have had a devotion to the angels since I was young, my first prayer taught by my mother was 'Angel of God my guardian dear' before we said our other prayers each night. I felt so close to my guardian angel and say the Chaplet, Litany with the salutations to St Michael. When I heard the pilgrim statue was coming to Scotland I had a picture in my mind of how St Michael would look and it was just as I imagined. I was delighted to offer my services to cover the plinth with drapery and flowers. I feel St Michael is guarding and protecting us since the start of this mission helping Mary accompanying the pilgrim statue every Wednesday with John O'Donnell and the Knights of St Columba.



**John:** One Good Friday I became aware I had a devotion to St Michael the Archangel. That night I looked up at my altar at home and whilst praying, a large 20" crucifix fell from the wall. The only thing that stopped the large crucifix falling was the strong wings of a statue of St Michael. I took this as a sign and from that day on I have devoutly prayed to St Michael.

I make a point of taking time out for St Michael and want to help him find his way throughout Scotland and help the Catholic Church. I want to make sure he arrives safely to each parish. It is a privilege for all of us Knights of St Columba to be involved. Wild horses would not stop me going to the Holy Mass or doing good deeds for St Michael.

**Mary:** Why do I do this? My faith is the greatest gift God has given me and I love it with all my heart. We are not meant to keep it to yourself and so through spreading devotion to St Michael and all the angels, I can share that gift with others; strong and lukewarm Catholics alike and sometimes with believers of other faiths and non-believers too.

St Michael though incredibly humble has also a powerful presence and knowing he stood strong against Lucifer even though ranked lower in the heavenly choir of angels, is extraordinary.

As God has given us these heavenly guardians to help and assist us in our earthly journey why would we not maximise that help?

During these times of trial and tribulation I can think of nothing more exhilarating than encouraging others to turn to our heavenly companions for comfort and assistance

in fulfilling God's holy will in each of our lives.

Oh! My birthday is also on the feast day of the guardian angels. Praise God.

**Q: How many people have seen St Michael so far? How many parishes has St Michael visited so far?**

**Maria:** It must now run into thousands. Due to the Sunday Masses, funerals, weddings and Christenings people have been exposed to the blessings of St Michael in different churches since early May 2022.

**John:** Wow! Thousands over this last six months. Many churches have stayed open for many hours a day. Some churches are having 24-hour adoration. While the church is open - the people come inside to pray.

**Mary:** Since 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022, thousands have been exposed to St Michael's pilgrim statue which has visited 29 parishes and the House of Prayer (home of Mary's Meals), Dalmally.

Three bishops & one archbishop have attended Mass and services in honour of St Michael. Bookings are in place leading up to Christmas time with some more enquiries being made for the New Year.

**Q: Why do you love St Michael so much? Did you receive graces by his intercession?**

**Maria:** When you love someone you feel close to them and that is how I feel about St Michael, so I always turn to him for assistance. I feel his presence and he really does guard, guide and protect me each day. Through God's mercy, the

graces and blessings I receive each day while at home, work and also when we transport the statue from church to church.

**John:** I feel so blessed he is in my thoughts and beside me every waking minute of the day, noon and night. St Michael has changed me, giving me a new look at my faith and my life. He is an addiction, he really does changes lives. I thank him for everything each day and these last six months that have been the best in my life.

**Mary:** My devotion to St Michael has grown and comforted me greatly these past number of months, encouraging me to learn more about my heavenly companions than ever before. The more I learn the more humble I feel and so, so protected by them.

In travelling around the country each week with Maria and John one of the most overwhelming emotions we all experience together is great joy. And great privilege that despite the evident darkness in the world, this apostolate is giving us all a great sense of wellbeing and security.

**Q: What happens when the pilgrim statue arrives?**

**Maria:** In the main, parishes start with the Holy Rosary, entrance hymn, followed by arrival procession and blessing. Votive holy Mass of holy angels and homily on St Michael's role in the Bible and the holy angels.

Some parishes arrange a full programme planned throughout the week; with different devotions taking place at different times of the day,

Holy Hour and times for confession and individual healings were made available. Healing service with the holy angels. Perpetual Adoration from morning until 10:00 p.m. or longer. Mass to Our Lady Queen of Angels, Chaplet of the Holy Angels and Angelus, Sung Chaplet of St Michael and Litany.

**John:** The people wait in anticipation while the Knights process with the statue of St Michael through the church to the altar for the blessing followed by the holy Mass and homily.

**Mary:** Each parish varies in reception of the statue. In some instances lunchtime Mass may be arranged. Evening services though are usually arranged when the Knights process in with the statue onto the altar. Hymns are sung, explanations given as to the purpose of St Michael's visit with an outline of the planned programme for each specific church. Novenas, chaplets and prayers are offered again according to the choice of the parish clergy.

Children's visits are encouraged in many parishes and facilitated by school teaching staff and parents alike.

40-hour devotions and healing services are often promoted along with extra periods of Eucharistic adoration.

**Q: Do people in Scotland know "The Angels" magazine? What do you and they think of it?**

**Maria:** I know about The Angels magazine due to Fr Dominic Towey, the former parish priest of St John the Baptist in Uddingston. It is very

informative and helpful for the people who know little about the angels. We notice when we set up a stall, people always pick up the magazines particularly while on the tour of Scotland with St Michael.

**John:** People ask for the current issue saying it is brilliant and magnificent. It awakens people to St Michael the Archangel and the angels. The Angels magazine opens up people's hearts, minds and it is a new thing in their lives. I do encourage people to buy the magazine.

**Mary:** We're encouraging more people to access The Angels magazines as we go along.

Finally, having been involved with church music ministry for many years one of the extra special blessings received through the visit of St Michael's pilgrim statue is the establishment of our church ministry group 'Miriam's Music', which has been invited to play at a number of St Michael services. It was not something planned but like the tour itself, has evolved over the past few months.

When invited to do the music we introduce the beautiful entrance hymn to St Michael, lyrics written by Noreen Bavister, which brings great joy to all who hear and join in with the singing.

We are eleven members who feel blessed to have been given the gift of singing and praying our sacred music together. A totally unexpected gift from God.

Interview with  
**Mary Doogan, Maria Glen**  
and **John O'Donnell** Scotland  
by Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA  
and his editorial team

## Prayer to St Michael

St Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

## Prayer for the Holy Souls in Purgatory by St Gertrude the Great

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.



■ St Gertrude by Miguel Cabrera, 1763

# St Michael and all the angels

**Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here. Ever this night be at my side, to light, to rule and guide. Amen.**

**T**his is one of the first prayers I learned from my mother. To pray to my guardian angel and ask for guidance. It is also particularly poignant for me that my birthday is the feast of the guardian angels, the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, and so I have always had a devotion to the angels and archangels.

## Guardian angels main role

God gave us guardian angels to protect and guide us. St Jerome wrote that the human souls is so valuable in heaven that every human person has a guardian angel from the moment the person comes into being. These pure spirits, which we can neither see nor feel, play an important role in our lives. Jesus refer to them in the Gospel when he says, "See that you never despise one of these little one; for, I tell you, that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven." (Matthew 18:10).

Angels are messengers from God. The word angels comes from the Greek word for "messenger." In a very real way, these powerful spirits point

out to us the ways of God. Guardian angels assist us in work or study. In the times of temptation, these spiritual beings directed us to do good. St Thomas Aquinas said that angels are the most excellent of creatures because they have the greatest intelligence next to God.

Perhaps the guardian angels are best are best known for protecting us from physical danger, but their main role is to care for the salvation of our souls. It is wonderful to know that God has promised to love, protect, and be with us always. One way he does this is through the care of the angels. Whenever you meet with danger or discouragement, your guardian angel is your personal, heavenly bodyguard. The angels also offer prayers to God for us. We should love our guardian angels, respect them, and pray to them.

In early Christianity there was no real feast for the guardian angels, just one for the archangels. But in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the feast of the Guardian Angels was unofficially celebrated in Austria, Spain and Portugal. In 1608 Pope Paul V made it a universal feast. In doing so, he helped to make us aware of the guardian angels, not just one day in October, but every day of our lives.



■ Deacon Colum Martin and Rev. Ghislain B. Mulumanzi in St Monica's Church, Coatbridge

## Power of Pope Leo XIII prayer

But, I would like to spend most of our time pondering St Michael, especially through the prayer that we traditionally say together to conclude every Mass. This prayer was decreed by Pope Leo XIII in 1886 because he saw the work that the devil was trying to do in the Church and in the world. He wanted everyone in the Church to grasp this reality and receive protection.

We need to be far more worried about spiritual attacks than we do about violent crime, but few of us



are. The prayer to St Michael was said after every Mass until 1964, when it was made optional. Many of us, would now usually pray this prayer during our recitation of the rosary. By praying this prayer, we acknowledge publicly that not only do the good angels exist but also Satan and the evil ones.

In the book of Revelation, we see that St Michael has already done, throwing Satan and his angels “down to earth.” We pray together that he do something further: to throw them down from earth to hell. And we pray this prayer in a special way for all those being attacked by the devil to distrust God and choose against God and his blessings.

## They conquered him by the Blood of the Lamb

The way for us to respond to St Michael’s protection is given to us immediately after by the “loud voice” that resonated in heaven. “Salvation and power have come” with the casting out of the “Accuser” who “night and day accused us before God.” As we also see in the Book of Job, the devil is always accusing us before God and accusing God before us. But he was defeated by God through Michael in a special threefold way: “They conquered him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; love for life did not deter them from death.” Three things:

1. The blood of the Lamb – This points not only to Christ’s triumph on the Cross but our sharing it through receiving his body

and blood in the Eucharist, being washed in it through confession. St Michael wants to defend us and lead us to victory by uniting us to the blood of Jesus.

2. The word of their testimony – This is, first, the word of God that the Angels have announced to us that, secondly, those who triumph had heard, received, treasured, enfleshed, lived and in turn proclaimed through white and red martyrdom or witness. St Michael and all the angels want to lead us to God’s word. Jesus defeated the devil’s manipulation of the word by half-truths. St Michael wants to defend us the same shield of the word of God and to make us witnesses cooperating with him in shielding others from the devil’s lies by the truth God has given to us.

3. Holy death instead of “love for life” – Jesus is clear to us that in order to save our life we must be willing to lose it, that unless we become like a grain of wheat falling to the ground and dying, we will bear no fruit. The greatest weapon in Satan’s arsenal is our love for this worldly life. If we are too afraid to suffer or die for Christ who suffered and died for us, the devil will have found our price and sooner or later he will seek to make us a new Judas. It is only when we, like the martyrs, are willing to give all that we can be protected from his wiles, whether we face martyrdom or not.

## Enter into their victory at Mass

We are here this evening to pray in a special way with St Michael the Archangel, but we have three

archangels and the greatest way Michael, Gabriel and Raphael help us to enter into their victory is here at Mass, when we hear God’s word in testimony, where we call out to them and all the angels to “pray for us to the Lord our God” for mercy in the Confiteor, where we receive Jesus’ blood shed for us in remission of sins and all our complicity with the devil, in which we are fortified to go as Gabriel’s announcing the word, accompanied by Raphael and defended by Michael. This is where we receive God’s strength, his medicine and his protection, to help us to do our own double service, ascending to God and descending to serve other, as they do for us.

## Angeles and saints gathered

In a few moments time, the angels and the saints will join us gathered round the altar when Christ make himself truly present to us in the Eucharist, but before that, let us invoke the intercession of St Michael as together we pray “St Michael the Archangel defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard 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 power of God, trust down to hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.”

Homily by  
Deacon **Colum Martin**  
St Monica’s Church,  
Coatbridge, Scotland  
Tuesday 12 July 2022

# Farewell, my dearest friend

**Some time ago, Willie and I talked about writing each other's eulogies (not seriously, of course) because we thought, wouldn't it be a much better idea to hear all the nice things that would be said about us while we were still alive?**



■ Willie Lapas with Patsy Gonzales

**T**his way, we could also have editing rights over our own eulogies. And in our case, we could also share what we meant to each other after so many years of friendship, often experiencing miraculous missions together that never ended for Willie until the day God called him home. Of course, we never shared our eulogies with each other, and now Willie will have to suffer through what I have to say. May I never have to write another one as difficult as this.

## Preparing for a banquet

A few years ago, while we were preparing for our centre's banquet, my grandson, Tristan, often announced Willie's arrival at the front door: "Mom, Juan Diego is here!" He didn't know who Juan Diego was, but to many of us, Willie and Juan Diego were one and the same. People could never speak

the centre's name without following it up with Willie's.

Listening to eulogies can bring so many perspectives about a life one has lived, as you are all hearing today. Willie wasn't, after all, just the director for Juan Diego but a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend, engineer, businessman, and most of all, a deeply faithful Catholic with "fire in his belly" who radiated everything that he believed in and deeply loved.

## Juan Diego Women's Centre

Just recently, Willie and I were reminiscing about our years working with pregnant mothers at Juan Diego Women's Centre, which stirred up remarkable memories. We both agreed our centre was one-of-a-kind as far as pregnancy centres go because ours was a centre without borders. We were present whenever a mother needed our

help – in the Philippines, Nigeria, and South Sudan, offering assistance and emotional support to women in places that included but went well beyond our centre in San Jose. We were there for mothers during their pregnancies and long after their babies were born to provide guidance, resources, support and love, free of judgment. We became family to mothers counselled in our centre when they were abandoned by theirs or had no family to speak of.

## Involvement in the pro-life

After being a father and husband, Willie's most extraordinary mission and legacy came from his involvement in the pro-life cause that gave him purpose. It would take volumes to recount the stories of every mom that chose life, by God's grace, and made the choice that impacted the rest of her life. When I'd quietly show Willie an intake form that

indicated a woman was planning an abortion, he would mobilize his spiritual arsenal. He would call the Poor Clare nuns, the Norbertines and priests – and send out an SOS message to our email list of supporters to pray while I was in the counselling room. He'd kneel before the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in our chapel to invoke her intercession. And if the boyfriend happened to be in the waiting room, Willie would be firm with his message to the boyfriend: "Real men take responsibility!" Willie was the perfect example to them of what a good father should be – strong, spiritual, protective and firm. He was a critical part of our centre's spirit and heart.

## He had a big heart

Willie had a big heart and a small budget at Juan Diego. Being a true son of St Josemaria Escriva, he installed a St Joseph statue with the inscription "Ite Ad Joseph" (go to Joseph) at the centre. It was there he would kneel before St Joseph to ask him to do his job of providing – or threaten to downgrade him. Our coffers ran low but never ran out. Unknown to many, Willie also had a fiery temper that erupted rarely – then he'd later remark, "Don't mess with a Batangueno" (a region of people known for their bad temper), or he would say, "I'm descended from Lapulapu!" (Lapulapu was a warrior chieftain that defeated Magellan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century!) But it was not unusual to see him shed a tear when a baby was lost or a post-aborted, heartbroken mother poured out her heart to him. He often said, "I'm getting old – I'm getting so emotional."

We didn't just stay at the centre. The centre came with us wherever we went. Our cell phones were never on silent, day or night. I remember getting a call

at eight in the evening, hearing his agitated voice, exclaiming, "We just got a call from the reversal hotline! We have 48 hours to save that baby." And within 12 hours, we saved Emily's baby with the first dose of the antidote because Willie had the foresight to order the progesterone treatment for her.

## Saving one life is worth all the effort

Often, our mothers became family that never lost touch with us. We delivered groceries to them in the Tenderloin district, drove them to appointments, did marriage counselling, put up Christmas trees, visited one boyfriend in jail, paid rent out of our own pockets, became godparents, sat outside delivery rooms and took some to Church when they wanted. We even taught one father to drive, who took pride in passing his 5<sup>th</sup> test! I shall never forget walking together past bars and ladies of the night on a sketchy street in San Francisco to deliver food to a pregnant mother staying in a seedy hotel. She was going through withdrawals and miraculously succeeded without ever relapsing. Willie gave her a rosary and encouraged her to trust that all was not hopeless. Even as we were nearing 1,000 babies saved, Willie always said just one would have been worth all the years and effort we put in.

## The icebreaker

In Willie's retirement issue of our newsletter as I reflected on it behind was the crucified Christ (Willie carried the spiritual and financial burdens of our centre), I extended Our Blessed Mother's love to our pregnant women

and Chiquita, my chihuahua who was a gift from a grateful mother whom we helped to choose life. Being in the east side of San Jose, I would take her sometimes to the centre because many Hispanic young women had chihuahuas. Chiquita was the icebreaker!

## No dream too big

Willie, there were no dreams too big, obstacles too insurmountable, no schemes too hare-brained for new spiritual projects I brought up to you that were too unworthy of your spiritual support and generosity. Beyond your retirement from Juan Diego, you promoted the St Joseph Cenacle booklet on behalf of our clergy, gave away hundreds of In Sinu Jesu books to priests and seminarians, and edited The Angels magazine for Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA.

Your last email was the first edit for an article on the Cherubim, the second choir of angels. You certainly died with your boots on. It's small wonder your heart gave out when it was the organ you used the most.

As you ride into the sunset with the love of your life, your beautiful Cecilia, please say a prayer for us who remain in this "valley of tears". Intercede on our behalf – that we may one day come to our judgment with our arms full of good works, just as you did. Thank you for being my dearest friend, confidante, spiritual adviser and "partner in crime".

May you rest in the eternal embrace of your heavenly mother and merciful Lord you served so well. There is little doubt in my mind that when you stood before your judgment, tiny voices spoke on your behalf, pleading, "Have mercy on him because he loved us."

**Patsy Gonzales, Texas, USA**



# Wait upon the Lord

**Wait upon the Lord, to grow in our faith, never to be distracted, waiting upon the Lord Almighty, for I believe in Your promises.**



*The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith like a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you. Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal at once"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper ready; fasten your belt and wait on me while I eat and drink. You yourself can eat and drink afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are useless servants: we have done no more than our duty"' (Luke 17:5-10).*

**H**appy Sunday to all of you. All of our readings today converge on one theme – the theme of faith. Faith that walks, faith in action, faith that is even as small as a mustard seed. God is not even requiring gigantic faith, even a sliver as small as a mustard seed is enough to begin the journey with our Lord. So let us pray like the apostles did, to ask the Lord to increase our faith. Can I hear you say that? LORD INCREASE OUR FAITH.

We live in a world where we all want everything so fast. We want the fastest internet broadband. We want fast food. We want a fast train. We want a fast Holy Mass. We want our business to be fast. We want to move fast in our career ladder. We want to move on the fast lane of life.

Can you imagine many times when you are slow on the road and people always cuss you out because you are not moving fast? That's the world that we are in. Being slow, being steady is becoming problematic to our world. Being slow implies that we are having to wait for things to happen. This becomes often irritable to people, to ourselves. But sometimes that is not the way God chooses to work in our lives. His plans are not our plans. His plans for us will come to pass as the Scripture says, but at the best time and at the right time. In our own judgement it may be slow but in God's providential plan, time is eternity, it is not slow. But the Lord asks us to wait. He is asking us to wait for the appointed time when he has decreed to meet us at the point of our need.

## God's time is best

This is often difficult. Even for me, a bishop. It's difficult for us even as priests. I want quick action among my priests but sometimes God says no, slow down. I am taking the faith, the journey to them. Sometimes we conceive of our ideas and we want them to happen immediately but God says "My time is the best." I think that all of us in the midst of our desire to move so fast in everything, we need greater faith, profound faith. We need to learn to wait for the Lord. My dear brothers and sisters, are you getting tired of waiting for God to answer your prayer? Some of us have been praying for so many times, we have been to this pilgrimage many times and yet it seems as if nothing is happening. Does it

seem that God has abandoned you and he has not taken notice of your prayers? In the situations of your life, in times it seems that God is slow in responding to your request. The Holy Scriptures today request of us that we should wait upon the Lord. That we should not despair. That God has not forgotten us in our pains, in our difficulties, in our requests, in our journeys, no matter how difficult it may be; for Scripture says those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. And as long as you are waiting for the Lord you will not grow weary. You will not faint. Rather the Lord will renew your strength. This is the promise of the Lord in the Book of Isaiah.

## Keep trusting in God

Perhaps like me, many of us have started to ask ourselves questions: Till when shall we wait? It is another new year and time is running out. Should I keep waiting aimlessly? It is taking forever for your dream, for my dream, to come true and your prayers seem not to be answered. Not being heard? That is the message from the Lord to us today. Do not be in a hurry with God. Keep trusting Him. Keep trusting in Him and the moment of waiting is the moment of growth. Like St Paul tells Timothy: "Fan into flame those profits of grace." Those moments of waiting are not empty moments of waiting. They are moments that we are supposed to fan into flame, the grace that we have received at baptism. The grace of fervent prayer. The grace of connecting with God, the Word of God, the sacraments. The Lord never disappoints His people, He will not disappoint

any of us. He will come quickly to our aid. The time of waiting is the time of testing our faith. Whether we have that faith as small as a mustard seed.

## Sharing my experience

I struggled this morning about sharing my testimony with you because it is embarrassing to me. I did not want

to share until the Blessed Mother said to me "Go ahead. I've given you that experience because I wanted to share it." I am a very shy person and I don't like to talk about myself but here this morning I have the burden of sharing this experience. Maybe it will help you as you wait upon the Lord and increase your strength. I have just been ordained three years a bishop and for 18 years I served as a teacher in a major seminary, one of the biggest in Nigeria and for about six of



■ Bishop Francis Obafemi Adesina

www.jjbuodcatholicdiocese.org

those years I was the head. I was the rector of the seminary. I remember in the year 2013 my home bishop was transferred from my home diocese and became archbishop of a metropolitan see where the seminary was located. And they said, "Aha, this is the reason why they made Francis the rector. Oh, suddenly he is going to become the bishop. I never wanted to be one. It was a difficult task to be a formator in seminary and to be a rector. Much less than the work of a bishop. For two or three years we waited but no bishop was given to our diocese."

Eventually, just one month before the bishop was announced, I was driving and my car broke down in the middle of nowhere, so I called the mechanic who would come to help me. While I waited, I wondered what happened to this vehicle. A voodoo man appeared from nowhere. He was selling his things. I knew he was a voodoo man by the way he was dressed. I was just pacing around with the Rosary in my hand around my vehicle and he came, he passed me and came back. He said to me "You are a great man." I was not dressed as a priest. "I see greatness all around you." He said to me "You are going to be greater than you are today but there are a lot of people blocking you, so you need to come to me so that I'll wash your head with special water and you'll be set free." I laughed at him and I said, "Sir, you made a mistake. I am a Catholic priest." He said "Don't worry about that. Nobody will know this." All I could say is (inside me, I didn't say it out loud) "Get out of my sight, Satan." I said "Thank you very much, you may go around; you may go to another place. I do not need your help. I don't want to be greater than who I am in

the presence of God." And so the man went away disappointed, hoping that I maybe will call him back. I didn't call him back.

All that historical time when the man spoke to me, I started hearing the voices of people "Oh, he is going to be the next bishop. Oh, why should I not do it, nobody will know." I was tempted but I did not go back and suddenly the new bishop was appointed and he was my junior three years in the priesthood. I was so glad for him. I was there at his ordination. I preached at his ordination thanksgiving.

A lot of people were disappointed that it was not me who was appointed but I was happy because I was not ready and it was not meant for me. It was two years after that, that a nearby diocese needed a bishop and people said "OK, now this is the time for Francis." Again, it happened. I wasn't made bishop. I was glad and I was at the celebration. At this time in the seminary, I became a person of scorn. Oh, people pitied me. "Oh, he was so good a guy but he will never become a bishop." Sometimes they said it behind my back. Sometimes they said it to my face but I was busy doing God's work because I loved to teach and I loved the scriptures. I was moving on.

## I was no longer the hope for my generation

My testimony is this: At this point everybody forgot about me, when I was no longer the hope of my generation, when everybody had

forgotten that I was a possible candidate priest. I was right there, December 28<sup>th</sup>, in an afternoon, saying Mass with a couple of people, when I got a call. "You have been made a bishop of another diocese." I never saw it coming. Nobody saw it coming. This is the waiting that the Lord says. I was not waiting so that I may become a bishop. I was waiting for God's plan in my life. At every moment I was thankful for God. If I was hasty, I would have followed Satan. If I was hasty, I would have done something bad but God was using those moments of appointments before me to train me, to prepare me for the mission He has for me and as I said, I felt like St Paul when he said, "I was the last, I was given birth to when nobody thought about it". To God be the glory forever and ever, Amen. My dear brothers and sisters, Scripture invites us to wait upon the Lord, to grow in our faith, never to be distracted, waiting upon the Lord Almighty, for I believe in Your promises. Help me and all of us by Your grace to be patient in waiting for You. Help me and all of us here today to trust in You more so that we may experience Your saving power, Your saving love. Help us, Lord, to grow in faith. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Today on the feast of your guardian angels, call them morning and night to guide, help and protect you.

Most Reverend  
**Francis Obafemi Adesina**  
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese  
of Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria

Homily at the English Mass  
in Medjugorje on Sunday  
2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022



# How to practise hope (part 3)

**In the arduous times of pandemic we experience various losses. Some of us lose health or loved ones; some lose work or their life savings. We all have lost the way of life that we used to lead before. Lots of us lose hope. How can we regain it and keep it on a daily basis?**

**H**ere are some tips suggested by Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Spe Salvi*.

## Judgement as a setting for learning and practising hope

At the conclusion of the central section of the Church's great *Credo* – the part that recounts the mystery of Christ, from his eternal birth of the Father and his temporal birth of the Virgin Mary, through his Cross and Resurrection to the second coming – we find the phrase: “he will come

again in glory to judge the living and the dead”. From the earliest times, the prospect of the Judgement has influenced Christians in their daily living as a criterion by which to order their present life, as a summons to their conscience, and at the same time as hope in God's justice. Faith in Christ has never looked merely backwards or merely upwards, but always also forwards to the hour of justice that the Lord repeatedly proclaimed. This looking ahead has given Christianity its importance for the present moment.

In the arrangement of Christian sacred buildings, which were intended to make visible the historic and cosmic breadth of faith in Christ,

it became customary to depict the Lord returning as a king – the symbol of hope – at the east end; while the west wall normally portrayed the Last Judgement as a symbol of our responsibility for our lives – a scene which followed and accompanied the faithful as they went out to resume their daily routine. As the iconography of the Last Judgement developed, however, more and more prominence was given to its ominous and frightening aspects, which obviously held more fascination for artists than the splendour of hope, often all too well concealed beneath the horrors.

## World without hope

In the modern era, the idea of the Last Judgement has faded into the background: Christian faith has been individualized and primarily oriented towards the salvation of the believer's own soul, while reflection on world history is largely dominated by the idea of progress.

The fundamental content of awaiting a final Judgement, however, has not disappeared: it has simply taken on a totally different form. The atheism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is – in its origins and aims – a type of moralism: a protest against the injustices of the world and of world history. A world



■ Pope Benedict XVI in Zagreb, June 2011

marked by so much injustice, innocent suffering, and cynicism of power cannot be the work of a good God. A God with responsibility for such a world would not be a just God, much less a good God. It is for the sake of morality that this God has to be contested.

Since there is no God to create justice, it seems man himself is now called to establish justice. If in the face of this world's suffering, protest against God is understandable, the claim that humanity can and must do what no God actually does or is able to do is both presumptuous and intrinsically false. It is no accident that this idea has led to the greatest forms of cruelty and violations of justice; rather, it is grounded in the intrinsic falsity of the claim.

A world which has to create its own justice is a world without hope. No one and nothing can answer for centuries of suffering. No one and nothing can guarantee that the cynicism of power – whatever beguiling ideological mask it adopts – will cease to dominate the world. This is why the great thinkers of the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, were equally critical of atheism and theism. Horkheimer radically excluded the possibility of ever finding a this-worldly substitute for God, while at the same time he rejected the image of a good and just God.

In an extreme radicalization of the Old Testament prohibition of images, he speaks of a “longing for the totally Other” that remains inaccessible – a cry of yearning directed at world history. Adorno also firmly upheld this total rejection of images, which naturally meant the exclusion of any “image” of a loving God.

On the other hand, he also constantly emphasized this “negative” dialectic and asserted that justice – true justice – would require a world “where not only present suffering would be wiped out, but also that which is irrevocably past would be undone”. This, would mean, however – to express it with positive and hence, for him, inadequate symbols – that there can be no justice without a resurrection of the dead. Yet this would have to involve “the resurrection of the flesh, something that is totally foreign to idealism and the realm of Absolute spirit”.

## God's image is the Innocent Sufferer

Christians likewise can and must constantly learn from the strict rejection of images that is contained in God's first commandment (cf. Ex 20:4). The truth of negative theology was highlighted by the Fourth Lateran Council, which explicitly stated that however great the similarity that may be established between Creator and creature, the dissimilarity between them is always greater. In any case, for the believer the rejection of images cannot be carried so far that one ends up, as Horkheimer and Adorno would like, by saying “no” to both theses – theism and atheism.

God has given himself an “image”: in Christ who was made man. In him who was crucified, the denial of false images of God is taken to an extreme. God now reveals his true face in the figure of the sufferer who shares man's God-forsaken condition by taking it upon himself. This innocent sufferer has attained the

certitude of hope: there is a God, and God can create justice in a way that we cannot conceive, yet we can begin to grasp it through faith. Yes, there is a resurrection of the flesh.

There is justice. There is an “undoing” of past suffering, a reparation that sets things aright. For this reason, faith in the Last Judgement is first and foremost hope – the need for which was made abundantly clear in the upheavals of recent centuries. I am convinced that the question of justice constitutes the essential argument, or in any case the strongest argument, in favour of faith in eternal life.

## Justice – our consolation and hope

The purely individual need for a fulfilment that is denied to us in this life, for an everlasting love that we await, is certainly an important motive for believing that man was made for eternity; but only in connection with the impossibility that the injustice of history should be the final word does the necessity for Christ's return and for new life become fully convincing.

To protest against God in the name of justice is not helpful. A world without God is a world without hope (cf. Eph 2:12). Only God can create justice. And faith gives us the certainty that he does so. The image of the Last Judgement is not primarily an image of terror, but an image of hope; for us it may even be the decisive image of hope. Is it not also a frightening image? I would say: it is an image that evokes responsibility, an image, therefore, of that fear of which Saint Hilary





■ The Last Judgement by Fra Angelico, c. 1431

spoke when he said that all our fear has its place in love.

God is justice and creates justice. This is our consolation and our hope. And in his justice there is also grace. This we know by turning our gaze to the crucified and risen Christ. Both these things – justice and grace – must be seen in their correct inner relationship. Grace does not cancel out justice. It does not make wrong into right. It is not a sponge which wipes everything away, so that whatever someone has done on earth ends up being of equal value.

Dostoevsky, for example, was right to protest against this kind of heaven and this kind of grace in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. Evildoers, in the end, do not sit at table at the eternal banquet beside their victims without distinction, as though nothing had happened.

## Intermediate state

Here I would like to quote a passage from Plato which expresses a

premonition of just judgement that in many respects remains true and salutary for Christians too. Albeit using mythological images, he expresses the truth with an unambiguous clarity, saying that in the end souls will stand naked before the judge. It no longer matters what they once were in history, but only what they are in truth: “Often, when it is the king or some other monarch or potentate that he (the judge) has to deal with, he finds that there is no soundness in the soul whatever; he finds it scourged and scarred by the various acts of perjury and wrong-doing ...; it is twisted and warped by lies and vanity, and nothing is straight because truth has had no part in its development. Power, luxury, pride, and debauchery have left it so full of disproportion and ugliness that when he has inspected it (he) sends it straight to prison, where on its arrival it will undergo the appropriate punishment... Sometimes, though, the eye of the judge lights on a different soul which has lived in purity and truth... then he is struck with

admiration and sends him to the isles of the blessed”.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31), Jesus admonishes us through the image of a soul destroyed by arrogance and opulence, who has created an impassable chasm between himself and the poor man; the chasm of being trapped within material pleasures; the chasm of forgetting the other, of incapacity to love, which then becomes a burning and unquenchable thirst.

We must note that in this parable Jesus is not referring to the final destiny after the Last Judgement, but is taking up a notion found, *inter alia*, in early Judaism, namely that of an intermediate state between death and resurrection, a state in which the final sentence is yet to be pronounced.

This early Jewish idea of an intermediate state includes the view that these souls are not simply in a sort of temporary custody but, as the parable of the rich man illustrates, are already being punished or are experiencing a provisional form of



bliss. There is also the idea that this state can involve purification and healing which mature the soul for communion with God. The early Church took up these concepts, and in the Western Church they gradually developed into the doctrine of purgatory. We do not need to examine here the complex historical paths of this development; it is enough to ask what it actually means.

## People's choices

With death, our life-choice becomes definitive – our life stands before the judge. Our choice, which in the course of an entire life takes on a certain shape, can have a variety of forms. There can be people who have totally destroyed their desire for truth and readiness to love, people for whom everything has become a lie, people who have lived for hatred and have suppressed all love within themselves. This is a terrifying thought, but alarming profiles of this type can be seen in certain figures of our own history.

In such people all would be beyond remedy and the destruction of good would be irrevocable: this is what we mean by the word *hell*. On the other hand there can be people who are utterly pure, completely permeated by God, and thus fully open to their neighbours – people for whom communion with God even now gives direction to their entire being and whose journey towards God only brings to fulfilment what they already are.

Yet we know from experience that neither case is normal in human life. For the great majority of people – we may suppose – there remains in the

depths of their being an ultimate interior openness to truth, to love, to God. In the concrete choices of life, however, it is covered over by ever new compromises with evil – much filth covers purity, but the thirst for purity remains and it still constantly re-emerges from all that is base and remains present in the soul.

What happens to such individuals when they appear before the Judge? Will all the impurity they have amassed through life suddenly cease to matter? What else might occur? Saint Paul, in his *First Letter to the Corinthians*, gives us an idea of the differing impact of God's judgement according to each person's particular circumstances. He does this using images which in some way try to express the invisible, without it being possible for us to conceptualize these images – simply because we can neither see into the world beyond death nor do we have any experience of it.

Paul begins by saying that Christian life is built upon a common foundation: Jesus Christ. This foundation endures. If we have stood firm on this foundation and built our life upon it, we know that it cannot be taken away from us even in death. Then Paul continues: "Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw – each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor 3:12-15).

In this text, it is in any case evident that our salvation can take different forms, that some of what is built may be burned down, that in order to be saved we personally have to pass through "fire" so as to become fully open to receiving God and able to take our place at the table of the eternal marriage-feast.

## Blessed pain

Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Saviour. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgement. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All that we build during our lives can prove to be mere straw, pure bluster, and it collapses.

Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, there lies salvation. His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation "as through fire". But it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God. In this way the inter-relation between justice and grace also becomes clear: the way we live our lives is not immaterial, but our defilement does not stain us forever if we have at least continued to reach out towards Christ, towards truth and towards love.

Indeed, it has already been burned away through Christ's Passion. At the moment of judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming

power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves. The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy. It is clear that we cannot calculate the “duration” of this transforming burning in terms of the chronological measurements of this world. The transforming “moment” of this encounter eludes earthly time-reckoning – it is the heart’s time, it is the time of “passage” to communion with God in the Body of Christ.

The judgement of God is hope, both because it is justice and because it is grace. If it were merely grace, making all earthly things cease to matter, God would still owe us an answer to the question about justice – the crucial question that we ask of history and of God. If it were merely justice, in the end it could bring only fear to us all. The incarnation of God in Christ has so closely linked the two together – judgement and grace – that justice is firmly established: we all work out our salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12).

Nevertheless grace allows us all to hope, and to go trustfully to meet the Judge whom we know as our “advocate”, or *parakletos* (cf. 1 Jn 2:1).

## How can we help the departed?

A further point must be mentioned here, because it is important for the practice of Christian hope. Early Jewish thought includes the idea that one can help the deceased in their intermediate state through prayer (see for example 2 Macc 12:38-45; first century BC). The equivalent practice was readily adopted by Christians and is common to the Eastern and

Western Church. The East does not recognize the purifying and expiatory suffering of souls in the afterlife, but it does acknowledge various levels of beatitude and of suffering in the intermediate state.

The souls of the departed can, however, receive “solace and refreshment” through the Eucharist, prayer and almsgiving. The belief that love can reach into the afterlife, that reciprocal giving and receiving is possible, in which our affection for one another continues beyond the limits of death – this has been a fundamental conviction of Christianity throughout the ages and it remains a source of comfort today. Who would not feel the need to convey to their departed loved ones a sign of kindness, a gesture of gratitude or even a request for pardon? Now a further question arises: if “purgatory” is simply purification through fire in the encounter with the Lord, Judge and Saviour, how can a third person intervene, even if he or she is particularly close to the other?

When we ask such a question, we should recall that no man is an island, entire of itself. Our lives are involved with one another, through innumerable interactions they are linked together. No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better and for worse. So my prayer for another is not something extraneous to that person, something external, not even after death.

In the interconnectedness of Being, my gratitude to the other – my prayer for him – can play a small part in his purification. And for that



■ Illustration of Lazarus at the rich man's gate by Fyodor Bronnikov, 1886

there is no need to convert earthly time into God’s time: in the communion of souls simple terrestrial time is superseded. It is never too late to touch the heart of another, nor is it ever in vain. In this way we further clarify an important element of the Christian concept of hope. Our hope is always essentially also hope for others; only thus is it truly hope for me too.

As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: how can I save myself? We should also ask: what can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them, too, the star of hope may rise? Then I will have done my utmost for my own personal salvation as well.

**Pope Benedict XVI**  
*Spe Salvi* (41-48)

# Veiling in the presence of the Angels



■ Pope Francis at the blessing the "Dowry Painting" of Our Lady of Walsingham, Feb 2020

**"The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest" (Luke 10: 2-3).**

Tradition tells the story of the first papal mission to England from Rome in 596; that St Pope Gregory the Great, later to become a Doctor of the Church; while walking through a marketplace that was selling slaves, was struck by the angelic faces of a gathering and asked which nation they had been brought from.

## Land of the Angels

The reply was that they were pagans, Angles, from the Island of Britain. His prophetic response that corresponded to this moment was that they were angels and destined to become a great faith-filled nation.

Divinely inspired at this scene, he commissioned his prior who was to become St Augustine of Canterbury and a host of monks with the first papal mission, which was to hand down the faith to the spiritually enslaved Anglo-Saxons and free them from their pagan practices to build a Christian heritage, in what was in time to become known as England: Our Lady's Dowry.

Over the centuries, shaping our Christian heritage, St Michael was given a special place in the hearts of the peoples of this land, as seen by the evidence of over 800 churches in his honour across the country.

St Edward the Confessor who set apart England and her peoples as a gift to Our Lady was on the throne in 1061 when she brought a message of Annunciation filled hope for the peoples of England, through Richeldis, the Lady of the Manor in Walsingham.

St Michael was honoured by this saintly king through continued devotion at his mount in Cornwall which was the site of a monastery from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries – a celestial apparition site of this great archangel.

In Glastonbury, on the hill above the once great abbey, lays the ruins of a church in honour of St Michael. It was at this place that Charlotte Boyd who was eventually able to purchase the Slipper Chapel in Walsingham, now the Basilica and National Shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary received her mission for the conversion of England at the age of 13 in 1850.

## Walsingham: England's Nazareth

At the time of Michaelmas, the harvest time in autumn, it would have been customary practice for the peoples of Walsingham to call upon the powerful intercession of St Michael to bless and protect the harvest. Eucharistic processions around village fields ending in benediction would have been a common sight for pilgrims at this time.

Walsingham has been a place of pilgrimage since the Middle Ages – one of four great shrines of medieval Christendom, ranking alongside Jerusalem, Rome and Compostella with Walsingham being the only one wholly devoted to Mary, the Mother of God.

According to the Pynson Ballad (c. 1485), Richeldis prayed and asked that she might undertake some special work in honour of Our Lady. She had a series of visions of the Virgin Mary, who showed her the house in Nazareth where the angel Gabriel made his angelic salutation to the Mother of God.

She was asked to build a replica of this holy house where all who were



in need could come, ask for help and share in her first joy of the mystery of the Annunciation when God became Man and dwelt among us.

Angels were to complete this holy house for the peoples of England and the world. A religious house grew up to support this mission called the Priory of the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God which embraced the mystery of the Annunciation, the Angelic Salutation of which we today unite our FIAT, our Yes to God with that of Mary to share in the work of salvation for humanity.

Three times a day, morning, noon and night the bells call out with the angels in Walsingham. These are the bells in ancient times that would have rung out, up and down this land for all her peoples to stop what they were doing for a moment in their daily lives, to pray the Angelus prayer, make sacred the moment and contemplate the great mystery contained therein.

The Priory and Holy House was a great Marian Shrine that every man and woman promised once in their lifetime in England to make a pilgrimage to up until the time of the English Reformation in 1538 when it was destroyed. Over a 100 years ago, pilgrims began to return to Walsingham. Today the world is beginning to know about this Marian Shrine once again.

## St Michael and my conversion

My early years featured a devotion to St Joan of Arc who had St Michael appear to her. With hindsight and faith these years later, I suspect St Michael had something to do with this friendship as with many moments of my

life that he has been there in sign and wonder.

It was not till I was 25 that I was received into the Catholic Church. There were several conversion moments on route for me, one being around the Book of Revelation and the very real battle described between St Michael and the Devil.

It was shortly after this that I found myself entering a Catholic Church to receive the profound grace of experiencing the True Presence of the Blessed Sacrament. I was home.

Two weeks later I found myself in Walsingham, the spiritual heart of England for the first time. It was the time of Michaelmas. This season with St Michael has ever remained special in my life and it is in this time that I travelled to the Shrine at Mount Gargano – the Celestial Basilica consecrated by St Michael himself.

The relic stone from this shrine I carry always, was brought back with me to Walsingham, in which devotion to St Michael has been passed on to others for their divine protection under his patronage.

At the end of each holy Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham, the St Michael prayer by Pope Leo XIII, who also prophesied “When England returns to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England” is said.

Devotion is once again spreading in England to St Michael beginning in Walsingham and is particularly strong amongst the children here. Upon showing the relic stone and telling its story to one of the local children, he ran home to his father desiring to have one and stating that his family should go to visit the shrine in Italy. At the shrine in Walsingham, it is a common sight to see a security team who are dedicated to St Michael.

In the painting above you will see the angels are bringing relics to Our Lady seated at the Annunciation Arch which is the remaining part of what was once the great shrine of Walsingham in the centre of the village. What a wonderful thought that the children of today having the faith of their fathers passed down to them have the aid of St Michael and his angelic wings of protection, to accompany them for the mission of Walsingham – the harvest of souls which is the conversion of England.

In thanksgiving to God and under the patronage of St Michael, I have recently set up a Marian Service called Traditional Walsingham which accompanies your Christian pilgrimage with traditional and bespoke chapel veils, baptismal gowns, palls for coffins as well as Mass sets and vestments made in a workshop consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Walsingham. For further information: [www.traditionalwalsingham.com](http://www.traditionalwalsingham.com)

Let us all call upon his intercession for the conversion of England: *St Michael, Prince, and Defender of the Church. We call upon your powerful intercession for England: Our Lady's Dowry. Protect her from the snares of the Devil who has sought to destroy the faith in this land. We implore your celestial help before the throne room of Almighty God for the conversion of England. St Michael who is always in the presence of God, at this hour of our need, cast into hell Satan and place your army of angels at every corner of this land to announce with a trumpet blast, that Our Lady is returning to England – the Land of Angels. Amen.*

For further information about Walsingham: [www.walsingham.org.uk](http://www.walsingham.org.uk)

**Clare Mary**  
Walsingham, England

**Calling all men from Derry City and throughout Ireland join the spiritual call to defend the Eucharist.**

# St Michael's call to men



■ Knights of St Michael, Derry Northern Ireland

A huge number witnessed God's army in action with some the men of the Eucharist and Knights of St Michael, confidently wearing large white and red scapulars, kneeling before the Eucharist during Adoration.

By Divine Providence, Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother brought several men together on the steps of St James Church, Medjugorje, in early October 2022 and hearts were touched. Now, through the grace of God, Knights of St Michael the Archangel, with the men of the Eucharist will lead in the efforts to evangelize and rejuvenate the Catholic faith and to promote true love for the Eucharist throughout Ireland.

Men met on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> November in Derry, Northern Ireland kneeling before the Eucharist, adoring Jesus. Following on from the Eucharistic Adoration and prayers an abundant number of men came forward to the altar for the St Michael Scapular Investiture.

The conditions for accepting the scapular of St Michael:

1. People should accept the scapular from the hands of an accredited priest or deacon.
2. People should wear it continually.
3. People should recite daily Pope Leo XIII's short prayer of exorcism. St Michael defend us in the day of battle.

Women and families have been supporting and joining in prayer that this spark will ignite many hearts not just in Ireland but also other countries. All gentlemen throughout Ireland are invited to any upcoming events along with other men's Rosary or prayer groups throughout the country.

For further info: Jim Crossan  
jim.crossan60@gmail.com

**Noreen Bavister, Deputy Editor**

## Prayer for Men

St Michael the Archangel, Our Prince and Advocate, most powerful protector and defender of families, along with Glorious St Benedict, we ask you to intercede on our behalf. Bless this ministry, pour your blessings on all the works we do. Help us to ignite the faith in Ireland by bringing men back into the churches and by kneeling in prayer in front of the Eucharist, bring faith back into the families in Ireland. Amen.



■ St Michael Church, Livermore, CA



■ St Michael Church, Livermore, CA



# The Archangel of the Divine Mercy

Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA, is an international preacher, messenger of mercy and messenger of St Michael and the holy angels. During a grace-filled, two weeks that included three parishes in California, he had the privilege of hosting parish missions called “The Power and Love of St Michael – the Archangel of the Divine Mercy”, culminating on the great Feast of the Guardian Angels.

Fr Joseph Illo, **Star of the Sea, San Francisco** wrote “Fr Peter’s mission was well received and I personally was most grateful for his talks and his ministry. We had a good turnout, larger than usual for a parish mission.

He spoke with simple conviction and dignity, delivering the Church’s teaching and devotion well. I would like to have him back in two years or so.”

Parishioners from the **St Michael Catholic Church, Livermore, CA**

gave thanks and praise for a blessed mission that included the Feast of the Archangels. Fr Peter was willing and accommodating to have his talks translated from English to Spanish for the Hispanic church community as he was delivering them.

Lourdes Carroll shared that the parishioners were blessed to have Fr Peter at the **St John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda, California**.

“In commemoration of the feasts of St Michael and the Holy Angels, we praised the Lord in the presence of the angels with the celebration of Holy Mass, a healing Holy Hour with the exposition of the Holy Eucharist, Fr Peter teachings on the precious gifts of God through His angels and saints, followed by an Act of Entrustment to St Michael. It was such a grace-filled heavenly banquet! May God bless Fr Peter and the Congregation of St Michael for



■ Star of the Sea, San Francisco

their missionary work in bringing us into closer union with Our Lord. We were filled with joy in the Spirit while understanding the intensity of the times we are living and the need to be sharers of light to others.”

**Noreen Bavister, England**



■ Star of the Sea, San Francisco, CA



■ St John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda, CA

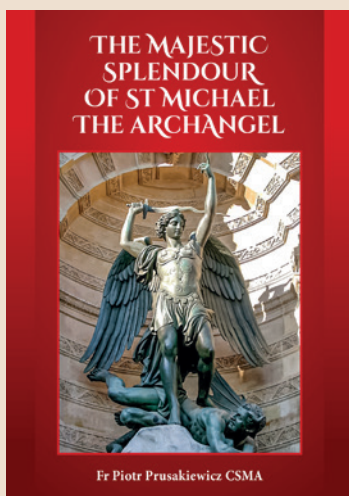


# ANGELIC BOOKSHOP RECOMMENDS

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People have often asked me about St Michael, the patron saint of my congregation. Due to the great interest in St Michael, I looked into the scientific and systematic study of many English, Italian and Polish authors throughout the ages internationally. My information also came from Holy Scripture and the traditions and teachings of the Doctors of the Roman Catholic Church whose works are true and timeless. I express my deep appreciation and gratitude to those who have spoken and written about Saint Michael the Archangel and helped me to discover and understand his greatness and splendour. This has enabled me to write articles and this new booklet about the Prince of the Heavenly Host. I hope that you discover St Michael the Archangel and hear his strong call from the bottom of his heart: Who is like God?

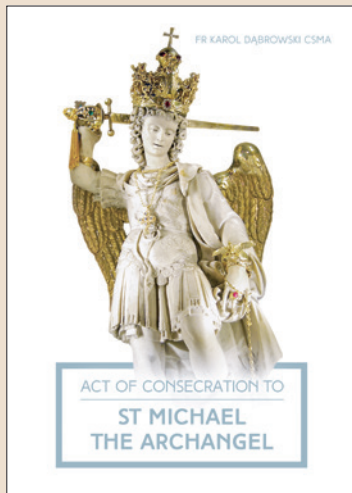
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## St Faustina and St Michael

St Faustina is full of wonder, respect, reverence and admiration for St Michael the Archangel. The fundamental and only reason behind such an attitude is, as she is at pains to stress, the fact that he did the will of God. He is for her the angel resplendent in his wonder and boundless humility towards the Creator. He is the angel who gazes at God with love, who learns the will of God and courageously carries it out.



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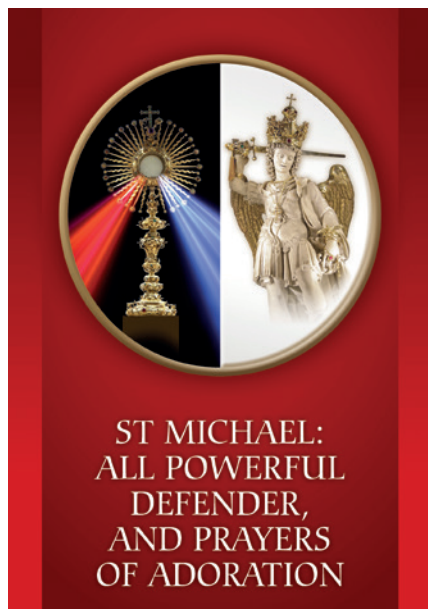
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# St Michael: All Powerful Defender, and Prayers of Adoration

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**Details of churches / shops  
and distributors – see subscription  
form inside middle of magazine**

## PHILIPPINESS 2023

**15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**Divine Mercy and St Michael  
Philippines Mission**

St Michael the Archangel Parish,  
Taguig City; Everest International  
Academy Philippines; St Michael the  
Archangel Parish, Tarlac City; Divine  
Mercy Parish Church, Silang Cavite  
Contact: Anton Gonzalez  
Phone: + 63(0)917-8121-228  
Email: antongonzalez@gmail.com

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## ENGLAND AND IRELAND 2023

**14<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Theme: Divine Mercy  
/ St Michael the Archangel Mission**

Contact: Noreen Bavister  
Phone: +44(0)7795-318-605

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## USA 2023

**29<sup>th</sup> January – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Divine Mercy and St Michael  
5<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Sunday Mass at 7:00 am,  
9:00 am, 11:00 am Mass followed  
by Eucharistic Healing Service  
4:00 pm St Michael Chaplet  
and Talk on angels  
5:00 pm Mass**

**Our Lady of the Atonement  
Catholic Church**

15415 Red Robin Road,  
San Antonio, Texas 78255  
Contact: Philip Sevilla  
Phone: +1(210)-784-0618  
Email: philsevilla@att.net

**7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Theme: Divine Mercy  
and St Michael the Archangel  
St Ambrose Catholic Church**

Deerfield Beach, Florida  
Parish Priest: Rev. Dariusz Zarebski S.D.S  
Contact: Vicky Yardley  
Phone: +1(954)-965-1609  
Email: yardlevicky@gmail.com

**10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Theme: Spirituality  
of St Faustina and her  
encounters with the Angels  
St Clares Retreat Centre**

2381 Laurel Glen Road,  
975073 Soquel,  
California  
Contact: Sr Vincent  
Phone: +1(831)-423-8093  
Email: stclaresretreatcenter@gmail.com  
Website: stclaresretreat.org

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**St Margaret Mary Church**

1101 W New Hope Drive,  
Cedar Park, Texas 78613  
Contact: Patsy Gonzalez  
Phone: +1(650)-224-6010  
Email: patsygee@yahoo.com

**7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Theme: Divine Mercy  
and St Michael the Archangel  
Florida**

Contact: Vicky Yardley  
Phone: +1 (954)- 965-1609  
Email: yardlevicky@gmail.com

**13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Theme: St Michael the Archangel  
St Maria Goretti Church**

8700 Bradshaw Road  
Elk Grove, CA 95624  
Contact: Fr Sylvester Kwiatkowski  
Office phone: +1(916)-647-4538

**17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Theme: Spirituality  
of St Faustina and her  
encounters with the Angels  
Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church**

5011 White Oak Ave,  
Encino, CA 91316  
Contact: Fr Marinello  
Email: fr.marinello.saguin@la-archdiocese.org  
Contact: Emily Amroses  
Phone: +1(916)-484-1900  
Email: emily@amroses.com



**25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Weekend Masses**

**27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Parish Mission: Divine Mercy,  
St Michael and the angels**

Santa Clara Church  
323 So E Street,  
Oxnard, California 93030  
Website: [www.santaclaraparish.org](http://www.santaclaraparish.org)  
Contact: Gloria Massey Chinae  
livestream services will be available

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## MALTA 2023

**16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**Theme: Divine Mercy and St Michael  
Venue: TBC**

Contact: Dennis Mifsud,  
Mifsud House,  
Bishop M.F. Buttigieg Street  
In-Nadur NDR 1363  
Gozo, Malta  
Email: dennismifsud84@gmail.com