

Michaelmas: Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels

Feast Day: September 29th

An Invocation of Angels The tradition of an angelic hierarchy dates back to before Christ. In the Middle Ages angels were organized by Catholic scholars into nine “choirs.” Beginning at the highest, they are:

1. **Seraphim:** fiery six-winged beings who attend the throne of God (cf. Is 6:1–7). Saint Michael is usually considered to be the highest of the seraphs, an “Arch-Archangel.”
2. **Cherubim:** these have four faces, wings, and are accompanied by the thrones. They guard the Garden of Eden and the throne of God (cf. Gen 3:24; Ezek 10). Little toddler/baby angels, popular in Renaissance artwork, are actually rightly called “putti” rather than cherubs.
3. **Thrones:** they are described as double wheels covered with eyes that move along at the side of the cherubim (cf. Ezek 10; Eph 1:21; Col 1:16). At this point one understands why the angels always have to greet humans by saying, “Do not be afraid” (cf. Tob 12:16; Mt 28:5; Lk 1:13, Lk 1:30; Lk 2:10).
4. **Dominions:** considered to be divinely beautiful human-looking angels with feathered wings, who regulate the actions of other angels.
5. **Principalities (or Rulers):** said to be the angels through which signs and miracles are made in the world.
6. **Powers:** usually represented in full armor, they are God’s warriors and oppose evil spirits.
7. **Virtues:** depicted with crowns and scepters, they are said to guide and protect the Church.
8. **Archangels:** said to be the guardians of nations, countries, and the world, who will announce the Second Coming (cf. Ex 32:34; 1 Thess 4:16).
9. **Angels:** these are sent as messengers to humanity and serve as individual guardian angels (cf. Ps 91:11; Mt 18:10).

You Angels and Archangels, you Thrones and Dominions, you Principalities and Powers, you Virtues of the heavens, Cherubim and Seraphim, bless the Lord forever. Bless the Lord, all you his Angels: you that are mighty in strength and execute his word. Bless the Lord, all you his hosts: you ministers of his that do his will. Amen.

Saint Michael Prayer

Saint Michael the archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world, seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Saint Gabriel Prayer

O God, who among all the Angels chose the Archangel Gabriel to announce the mystery of your incarnation; mercifully grant, that we who solemnly keep his feast on earth may feel the benefit of his patronage in heaven: who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Saint Raphael Prayer

Vouchsafe, O Lord God, to send unto our assistance Saint Raphael the Archangel: and may he, who, we believe, evermore stands before the throne of your majesty, offer unto you our humble petitions to be blessed by you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.