

Liturgy Bytes—The Archangels

At the end of this month (on September 29th), the Church celebrates the feast of the Archangels: Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. The Church confirms the existence of angels and that they are active in our lives. The word angel comes from a Greek word which means messenger. Since I am named for one of them, I will begin with Michael.

St. Michael's name means "one who is like God." He is mentioned four times in the Bible: in the book of Daniel (twice), in the letter of Jude and in the book of Revelations. He is known as the "Prince of the Heavenly Host" and considered the leader of the angels and the one who cast down Lucifer into hell. He is invoked for protection against the devil and all evil. In 1917, Michael appeared to the children of Fatima to prepare them for the work of the Blessed Mother.



Next, we focus on St. Gabriel. His name means "God's strength" and is mentioned four times in the Bible. Most significant are Gabriel's two mentions in the New Testament to announce the birth of John the Baptist to his father, Zachary, and at the Incarnation – the birth of Jesus. Tradition also suggests that he appeared to St. Joseph and the Shepherds and then to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane to offer him strength for what he was about to endure.

Our last of the archangels is Raphael. His name means "God has healed." This name was given because he healed Tobias' blindness which we read about in the book of Tobit. Tobit is the only book in which Raphael is mentioned. Actually, he is known for healing and acts of mercy. Raphael is also identified with the angel in John 5:1-4 who descended upon the pond and bestowed healing powers upon it so that the first to enter it would be healed of whatever infirmity they were suffering. God has commended to each of us an angel for our very own. Let us thank God for our own angels and for these archangels.

Have a blessed, safe, healthy and angelic week! ~~~Michele Hahn