

Wednesday 29 September 2021

St Michael and All Angels



Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are the only angels named in the Bible. The Scripture depict them as the beloved messengers of God.

The name 'Michael' means 'who is like God?' He is described as protector of Israel and leader of the armies of God and is perhaps best known as the slayer of the dragon in the Revelation to John. He is thus regarded as the protector of Christians from the devil, particularly those at the hour of death. A basilica near Rome was dedicated in the fifth century in honour of Michael on 30 September, beginning with celebrations on the eve of that day, and 29 September is now kept in honour of Michael and all Angels throughout the western Church.

Sermon © the Revd Denise Owen.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

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The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Angel voices ever singing](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

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

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

We have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to myriads of angels, to God, the judge of all, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

Now your glorious reign begin:

Now your glorious reign begin.

You O Son of God are Holy,

You we praise with one accord.

None in heav'n or earth is like you,

Only you are Christ the Lord.

With the Father and the Spirit,

Ever worshipped and adored:

Ever worshipped and adored.

The Collect for St Michael and all Angels

Everlasting God,

you have ordained and constituted the ministries

of angels and mortals in a wonderful order:

grant that as your holy angels

always serve you in heaven,

so, at your command,

they may help and defend us on earth;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the first book of Moses called Genesis

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you

wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!' And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' *Genesis 28:10–17*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Revelation of St John the Divine

War broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!' *Revelation 12:7–12*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Majesty, worship His majesty ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you get to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you

will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' *John 1:47-51*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Have you ever seen those 'Guardian Angels' you can buy in some shops? They often come attached to a card with a comforting message assuring the reader that a guardian angel watches over them. You can also buy guardian angels as earrings or as part of a bracelet. A friend of mine gave me a very small angel made of crystal a few years ago. It has a little piece of wire coming from the top of its head so I can hang it up. It now dangles from one of my bookshelves, and offers an irresistible opportunity for my cat, Larry, to try to knock it to the floor. I understand why people would want to offer a 'guardian angel' to a friend; what could be more comforting in times of trouble than to think we have a special angel who looks after us and is with us whenever we are in need. The little angels are a symbol that there is an invisible being close by and keeping watch.

As Christians, we should acknowledge that there is in fact an invisible being close by and keeping watch, not an angel, of course, but God God's self. More than that, the Spirit of God is not just close by and keeping watch, but is in us and with us, guiding us and empowering us. Perhaps not such a pretty image as a guardian angel made of crystal, but surely more powerful and more true. Also, more challenging, because although God does comfort and reassure, God also judges, and expects us to reflect, and expects us to repent. I'm not sure the 'Guardian Angel' type figures you find in card shops would have the same demanding expectations.

On this Feast Day of Michael and All Angels it's worth considering the role that angels actually fulfil in the biblical narrative. Look again at today's readings. Jacob dreams of the angels tirelessly descending and ascending the ladder between earth and heaven. Are they moving up and down in this way for humankind or for God? It is perhaps a visual representation of the closeness of God to humankind. The angels descending and ascending in this way, and it seems ceaselessly ascending and descending, is an image of the care and closeness and ceaseless compassion and mercy of God for God's people. This is also referred to in the reading from John's Gospel; what is currently real but invisible, will one day be real and visible.

Visual images are important to us as Christians; crosses, candles, stained glass windows, icons, I'm sure you can name many more, and all have their part to play in helping us to understand how God has acted and continues to act and intervene

in the world. How many Christmas cards have we received depicting the choir of angels rejoicing at the birth of Christ? One of those rare moments when heaven is opened up so that people on earth can see and know the joy of heaven.

We may even sometimes see images of the Archangel Michael after his defeat of the dragon that we read in the passage from Revelation. I'm thinking of the statue on the side of Coventry Cathedral by Jacob Epstein, in which Michael stands in triumph over the defeated devil. This angel is definitely not made of crystal, and does not come with a comforting verse or two. This is an angel that we can imagine being involved in a war against the forces of evil, again not the kind of comforting angels we hang from Christmas trees or have as jewellery.

The angels we celebrate in today's feast are active and busy doing God's work, fighting for good against evil and showing humankind the goodness and righteousness of God. They are not the kind of angels I described at the beginning, which are more akin to fairy folk than messengers of God.

Angels are God's messengers and the message they bring today in our readings is challenging. 'The Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!' says Jacob. A challenge for us, perhaps, to forgo the 'Guardian Angel' image of an unseen being, and know that it is God who is with us now and always.

'Michael and his angels fought the dragon.' Another challenge for us perhaps, to resist the many temptations of the world that lead us away from God.

'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' And finally, a challenge for us to remember that Jesus the Christ is now seated in glory, as King of creation, the creation that includes all of humankind, the animal kingdom and created order and of course, the angels in heaven. Amen

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

In the power of the Spirit,

and in union with Christ,

let us pray to the Father.

Father in heaven,

by his blood your Christ has ransomed us to you,

and has made us a kingdom and priests to you our God.

As the angels minister to you in heaven,

strengthen your Church to serve you here on earth.

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,

when the angels greeted the birth of your Son

they sang for joy 'Glory to God and peace on earth'.

Bless with Christ's peace the nations of the world.

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,

your Son has promised to your children

Protect by your mercy our neighbours, families and friends.

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,

you give your angels charge over those who trust in you

to guard them in all their ways.

Be with those in trouble...,

rescue them and show them your salvation.

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,
your angel declares 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.'
'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit,
'for they may rest from their labours,
for they take with them the record of their deeds.'
Enfold in your love [... and] all who come in faith
to your judgement seat in heaven.
Lord, hear us,
All Lord, graciously hear us.

Father in heaven,
the angels sing by day and night around your throne:
'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty.'
With Michael, prince of the angels, who contends by our side,
with Gabriel, your herald, who brings glad tidings,
with Raphael, the protector, who ministers your healing,
and with the whole company of heaven,
we worship you, we give you glory,
we sing your praise and exalt you for ever.
All Amen.

Merciful Father,
**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Hear again the song of the angels: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.'
The peace of the Lord be always with you,
All And also with you.

HYMN 3 All hail the power of Jesus' name ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God keep you in the fellowship of his saints;
Christ protect you by the ministry of the angels;
the Spirit make you holy in God's service;
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 I cannot tell

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
You reveal your wise purpose
for the salvation of the human race
by assigning to the angels and archangels
the ministry of your steadfast love and protection.
While they contemplate your glory,
standing before you and singing your praise,
they keep a faithful vigil for us,
guarding us along the way that leads to life,
and guiding us towards the kingdom of your light.
In joyful gladness we unite our voices with theirs
and sing the ageless hymn of your praise:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with St Michael and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord of heaven,
in this eucharist you have brought us near
to an innumerable company of angels
and to the spirits of the saints made perfect:
as in this food of our earthly pilgrimage
we have shared their fellowship,
so may we come to share their joy in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.