

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Michael the Archangel

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: September 29

Saintspedia · saintspedia.com

IN BRIEF

Saint Michael the Archangel

Archangel, leader of the heavenly host, invoked in the battle against evil.

Feast day	September 29
Canonized	Venerated since ancient times (an angel, never canonized)
Patron saint of	France, the Church, soldiers, paratroopers, police officers, the dying

In this booklet

Life

Saint Michael Prayer of Pope Leo XIII

Novena to Saint Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael Sanctuary in Monte Sant'Angelo

Credits and sources

Booklet offered by Saintspedia, the directory of Catholic saints: lives of the saints, prayers, novenas and places of pilgrimage, at saintspedia.com. Texts written by Saintspedia, except traditional prayers marked as such. Original prayers and novenas are not official liturgical texts. Free booklet, to print and share for personal, family or parish use; please do not sell it.

LIFE

Saint Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael is one of the three archangels named in the Bible, together with Gabriel and Raphael. His Hebrew name, Mikha'el, means "Who is like God?", a question that rings out as a cry of loyalty. The Book of Revelation shows him leading the angels in battle against the dragon, a figure of evil. Honored on September 29 with the other two archangels, he has been invoked for centuries in temptation, in danger and at the hour of death, above all through the famous Saint Michael prayer of Pope Leo XIII.

Who is Saint Michael the Archangel?

Saint Michael is not a human being who became a saint after death, but an angel: according to Christian faith, a purely spiritual creature at the service of God. He therefore has no date of birth, no earthly biography and no canonization. His veneration is immemorial and was inherited from Judaism. The title "archangel," which the Letter of Jude gives him, refers to an angel of the highest rank. The Church honors him as the defender of God's people and the leader of the heavenly host.

His name sums up his mission. By asking "Who is like God?", Michael reminds us that no one can take God's place. Christian tradition has seen in this cry the answer to the pride of Satan, who wanted to be equal to God.

Key dates

- **Book of Daniel (2nd century BC)**: Michael appears as "one of the chief princes" and protector of the people of Israel.
- **Late 1st century**: The Book of Revelation shows him fighting the dragon with his angels.

- **Late 5th century**: Apparitions reported on Mount Gargano, in Apulia, according to the shrine's tradition.
- **5th-6th century**: Dedication of a basilica of Saint Michael on the Via Salaria in Rome, on a September 29, the origin of the feast's date.
- **590**: According to an ancient legend, Saint Gregory the Great sees the angel sheathe his sword above the tomb of Hadrian, which became Castel Sant'Angelo.
- **708-709**: According to tradition, Saint Aubert founds a sanctuary on Mont Tombe, the future Mont-Saint-Michel, dedicated on October 16, 709.
- **966**: Benedictine monks settle at Mont-Saint-Michel.
- **1224**: Saint Francis of Assisi receives the stigmata at La Verna, during the fast he kept in honor of Saint Michael.
- **1886**: Leo XIII prescribes the prayer to Saint Michael after Low Mass.
- **1969**: The Roman calendar unites Michael, Gabriel and Raphael in one feast on September 29.
- **July 5, 2013**: Pope Francis consecrates Vatican City State to Saint Joseph and Saint Michael the Archangel.

Saint Michael in the Bible

Michael is named five times in Scripture. The Book of Daniel presents him as a heavenly "prince" who comes to the aid of God's messenger (Daniel 10:13 and 21) and who will arise at the end of time to protect the people (Daniel 12:1). The Letter of Jude reports that he disputed with the devil over the body of Moses without uttering a curse, saying only: "May the Lord rebuke you" (Jude 9).

The best-known passage is in the Book of Revelation, attributed by tradition to Saint John: "Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels battled against the dragon" (Revelation 12:7). The dragon, "the ancient serpent, who

is called the Devil and Satan," is thrown down to earth. These images do not describe a physical battle. In the symbolic language of Revelation, they proclaim God's victory over evil, to strengthen persecuted Christians. Michael's battle is a spiritual one, against evil and lies, never against people.



Sanctuary of Saint Michael on the Gargano, facade. Bernard Gagnon, April 28, 2022. CC0. Resized and converted to WebP. Source · License

A feast shared with Gabriel and Raphael

On September 29, the General Roman Calendar celebrates the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael together. The date comes from the dedication of a church of Saint Michael on the Via Salaria in Rome in late antiquity. In England this day was long known as Michaelmas, one of the quarter days that marked rents, leases and the farming year. Since the reform of 1969, the feast

has united the three archangels, whose missions are distinct: Gabriel announces, Raphael heals and accompanies, Michael protects and defends. The Eastern Churches honor Saint Michael and the heavenly powers on November 8.

The Gargano and Mont-Saint-Michel

Two great shrines carried devotion to Saint Michael across the West. The first is the cave of Monte Sant'Angelo, on the Gargano peninsula in southern Italy, where tradition reports apparitions at the end of the 5th century. The Lombards made it their national shrine, and pilgrims bound for the Holy Land stopped there. Saint Francis of Assisi is said to have come, but, judging himself unworthy, did not dare enter the cave.

The second is Mont-Saint-Michel, in Normandy. According to tradition, the archangel appeared in 708 to Saint Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, and asked him to build a sanctuary on the rock, modeled on the one at the Gargano. The Benedictine abbey that grew there became one of the great pilgrimages of medieval Christendom, nicknamed "the Marvel." During the Hundred Years' War the Mount held out against the English, and Saint Michael became the protector of the kingdom of France. He is the one Saint Joan of Arc recognized among her voices, along with Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine.

Why is Saint Michael the patron saint of soldiers, police officers and the dying?

As the leader of the heavenly army who defends God's people, Michael became the patron of those who protect others: soldiers, paratroopers and, in the English-speaking world especially, police officers. He has long been the traditional protector of France and of the Church.

He is also invoked for the dying. In Last Judgment scenes he often holds scales to weigh souls, an image drawn from tradition rather than from the Bible. The old liturgy for the dead asked that "Saint Michael the standard-bearer" lead souls "into the holy light."

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Michael in art

Michael is shown young, winged and in armor, overcoming a dragon or a figure of Satan with a sword or a spear. He often carries the scales of judgment. The painting by Guido Reni, made around 1636 for the Capuchin church in Rome, is one of the most copied images of him. Its calm is telling: the archangel does not fight with hatred, he conquers by the power of God.

What Saint Michael teaches

Saint Michael reminds us that evil exists, but that it does not have the last word. His name is a lesson in humility: he does not put himself forward, he points to God. To pray to him is to ask for the courage to reject lies and temptation, to protect the weakest and to stay faithful in trials. The battle he inspires is an inner one and never justifies hatred of a brother or sister.

To pray with him, read the Saint Michael prayer of Leo XIII, or follow the novena to Saint Michael the Archangel, from September 20 to 28 so that it ends on the eve of his feast.

Where to pray to Saint Michael

- **Monte Sant'Angelo** (Italy): the Sanctuary of Saint Michael on the Gargano, the cave of the apparitions.
- **Mont-Saint-Michel** (Normandy, France): the abbey, a major place of pilgrimage since the Middle Ages.
- **Rome**: Castel Sant'Angelo, crowned by a statue of the archangel, and the Capuchin church, which keeps Guido Reni's painting.

- **Le Puy-en-Velay** (France): the chapel of Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe, perched on a volcanic rock.
- **Susa Valley** (Italy): the Sacra di San Michele, an abbey high above the valley.

PRAYER

Saint Michael Prayer of Pope Leo XIII



The prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel is one of the most widely prayed prayers in the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XIII composed it and, from 1886, had it recited at the end of Low Mass along with other prayers. Below you will find its traditional English text, the Latin original, its history, and an original prayer by Saintspedia asking for courage in the spiritual battle.

Saint Michael Prayer of Pope Leo XIII

This is the English translation in common use for generations; it is in the public domain.

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

The original Latin text

Sancte Michael Archangele, defende nos in proelio; contra nequitiam et insidias diaboli esto praesidium. Imperet illi Deus, supplices deprecamur: tuque, Princeps militiae caelestis, Satanam aliosque spiritus malignos, qui ad perditionem animarum pervagantur in mundo, divina virtute in infernum detrude. Amen.

Source: prayer of Leo XIII, added in 1886 to the prayers said after Low Mass (known as the Leonine Prayers). These prayers ceased to be obligatory in 1964, but the prayer to Saint Michael has remained very popular.

The history of the Saint Michael prayer

Leo XIII introduced it at a time when he judged the Church to be under threat, and he asked that prayers be said at the end of every Low Mass for the freedom of the Church. A story often repeated, according to which the pope wrote it after a vision during Mass, is not supported by reliable sources. Saint John Paul II recommended praying it in 1994. On September 29, 2018, the Holy See announced that Pope Francis was inviting all the faithful to pray the Rosary every day during October and to end it with this prayer to Saint Michael, for the protection of the Church.

Original prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael the Archangel, servant of the living God, stay with us when fear, lies or temptation trouble our hearts. Pray that we may remain faithful to Christ and choose the truth with humility.

Help us to resist evil without feeding hatred. May our courage protect the most vulnerable, respect every person and refuse words that wound needlessly. In conflict, teach us to ask for the help we need, to set fair limits and to look for paths of peace.

We entrust this intention to the Lord: (name it in silence). May his light guide our steps today. Saint Michael, pray for us and strengthen us in doing good. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

The prayer of Leo XIII is short: you can say it every day, in the morning, at the end of the Rosary, or in a moment of temptation or fear. Saint Michael is honored on September 29 with the archangels Gabriel and Raphael, and October, at the request of Pope Francis in 2018, is a privileged time for this prayer. Catholics also pray to him for the dying, for the protection of a home or a family, and for soldiers and police officers. For a longer time of prayer, follow the novena to Saint Michael the Archangel, and read who Saint Michael is.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Michael the Archangel



This novena to Saint Michael the Archangel is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the Bible passages in which the archangel appears. It is not an official liturgical text, nor a prayer dictated in an apparition. To finish it on the eve of his feast, begin on September 20: the novena ends on September 28, and September 29 becomes a day of thanksgiving. You can also pray it at any other time, during a trial or before a difficult decision.

How to pray this novena

Each day, set aside a quiet moment and entrust your intention to God. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father and the Saint Michael prayer of Leo XIII. The small act suggested for each day helps make the spiritual battle concrete. A novena is not a promise of an automatic result: it is a path of trust. If you miss a day, simply pick up again in peace. You can pray alone, with your family or with a parish group.

Day 1: Who is like God?

Michael's name is a question that puts everything back in its place. No one is like God: not money, not power, not ourselves. Recognizing God as first frees us from many fears.

Prayer: Saint Michael, help me give God the first place in my life. I entrust to you the intention of this novena.

Today: Begin the day with a prayer, before looking at any screen.

Day 2: The prince who protects

In the Book of Daniel, Michael is the prince who stands beside God's people in times of distress. God does not abandon his own in their trials. Michael's protection is a sign that no one is forgotten, even when help seems slow to come.

Prayer: Saint Michael, protector of God's people, watch over the Church, over my family and over all who are going through a time of anguish.

Today: Pray by name for someone who is suffering.

Day 3: Choosing the truth

In the Gospel, the devil is called "the father of lies." To fight alongside Michael is first of all to refuse lies, beginning with the small compromises we make with the truth.

Prayer: Saint Michael, give me the courage to speak the truth gently and to refuse gossip.

Today: Do not pass on any information you are not sure of.

Day 4: Resisting temptation

Temptation rarely presents itself as an obvious evil. It often looks like an easy good. Naming what attracts us is already a first step toward resisting it. Michael's victory reminds us that we do not fight with our own strength alone, but with the grace of God.

Prayer: Saint Michael, defend me in battle. When temptation comes, remind me that God is stronger.

Today: Set a clear limit on a habit that does you harm.

Day 5: Without cursing

In the Letter of Jude, even when facing the devil, Michael does not utter a curse. He says only: "May the Lord rebuke you." The archangel's strength is not violence; it is trust in God.

Prayer: Saint Michael, keep me from anger and from words that wound. Teach me to hand over to God what is beyond me.

Today: Hold back a harsh word, or ask forgiveness for having said one.

Day 6: Protecting the weakest

Strength has meaning when it is put at the service of others. Just as the archangel stands by a people under threat, we can stand by those who are humiliated or pushed aside.

Prayer: Saint Michael, make me brave enough to defend those whom no one defends, without humiliating anyone in turn.

Today: Support someone who is isolated or left out.

Day 7: War in heaven

In the Book of Revelation, Michael and his angels fight the dragon, and the dragon is defeated. This account is meant to encourage: evil may seem powerful, but its defeat has already been announced.

Prayer: Saint Michael, when I am discouraged by the evil around me, strengthen my hope in the victory of Christ.

Today: Read Revelation 12:7-12 slowly.

Day 8: With all the angels

Michael does not fight alone: he is surrounded by his angels. Christian faith holds that each of us is accompanied by a guardian angel. We never walk alone, even in the hours when God seems silent.

Prayer: Saint Michael, with all the angels, guard us on our roads and in our homes. Thank you for the angel who watches over me.

Today: Pray to your guardian angel, or to the guardian angel of someone you love.

Day 9: Toward the light

The old liturgy for the dead asked that Saint Michael lead souls "into the holy light." Catholics invoke him for those who are about to die, and for themselves, so as to live even now as children of light.

Prayer: Saint Michael, pray for those who will die today, and for me at the hour of my death. At the end of this novena, I place my intention in God's hands. Amen.

Today: Pray for someone who has died, or go to confession.

Closing prayer

Saint Michael the Archangel, whose name proclaims that no one is like God, I entrust to you the intention of these nine days. Defend me in the battle against evil, keep me in truth and in peace, and lead me one day, with all those I love, into the light of God. Amen.

To go further, read who Saint Michael the Archangel is and the Saint Michael prayer of Leo XIII.

PILGRIMAGE

Saint Michael Sanctuary in Monte Sant'Angelo



Saint Michael's sanctuary stands in Monte Sant'Angelo on the Gargano massif in Puglia, Italy. Its grotto is an ancient place of prayer and pilgrimage dedicated to the archangel Michael.

History and connection with the saint

Devotion to Michael at this grotto dates to late antiquity. The apparition accounts underlying the sanctuary's tradition belong to its devotional history; they are not a human biography of the archangel. The site became especially important in Lombard culture and forms part of the UNESCO property "Longobards in Italy. Places of the Power". The grotto, façade and traces of pilgrimage show how this devotion has developed over centuries.

A place for prayer

The biblical figure of Michael invites recognition of God and the choice of goodness. Prayer here can entrust a fear, seek discernment or support a commitment to peace. Spiritual strength never justifies hatred or humiliating others.

Related reading

- Read the life of Saint Michael the Archangel
- Associated prayer
- Nine-day novena

Credits and sources

Texts: Saintspedia (saintspedia.com). The sources cited in each part are those of the corresponding page of the website. Biographical data partly from Wikidata (CC0). Font: EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License).

Images

- Cover: Guido Reni, c. 1636. public domain / public domain, Wikimedia Commons. Source
- Saint Michael Prayer of Pope Leo XIII: Guido Reni, c. 1636. public domain / public domain, Wikimedia Commons. Source
- Novena to Saint Michael the Archangel: Guido Reni, c. 1636. public domain / public domain, Wikimedia Commons. Source
- Saint Michael Sanctuary in Monte Sant'Angelo: Saint Michael sanctuary in Gargano, façade. Bernard Gagnon, 28 April 2022. CC0. Resized and converted to WebP. Source · License



More free booklets

Lives of the saints, prayers, novenas and places of pilgrimage: find all the booklets to print at

saintspedia.com