PRAYERS IN THE PEW™ MONTHLY

Faith Formation Companion to Prayers in the Pew™

FAITH IN ACTION CALENDAR / HIGHLIGHTS	
WED **SEP 8**	Feast of the Birth of Mary
TUES **SEP 14**	Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
WED **SEP 29**	Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels

MONTHLY SYNOPSIS

September 2021 – At the end of this month the Church celebrates our heavenly helpers, the great Archangels. It is fitting for us to reflect on how much the angels do for us and how they motivate us to go "into the breach" of our society's chaos to defend our faith and live it courageously. Let us ask the angels to help us to be more deeply spiritual men and women.

THE PRAYER TO
ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Michael the Archangel. He is the only angel to appear in at least four books of the Bible (Joshua 5-6, Daniel 12, Jude 9, Revelation 12) and is the most important of all angels. He is rightly known as the Prince of the Heavenly Host and the Protector of the Church.

Most people don't know that Michael's name is not actually a name – it is a battle cry! In response to Lucifer's audacity in comparing himself to the Creator, Michael immediately rose and rebuked the wicked angel with the phrase that became his name: "Who is like God?" In the Hebrew language this rhetorical question consists of three short syllables: "Mi-cha-El", Michael. He then cast Satan and the other rebellious angels from Heaven in the ferocious battle that we read about in Chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation.

Despite the Church's long devotion to the warrior angel, its most famous prayer to the Archangel Michael is rather recent, and there is a fascinating story about its origins. The records are not clear on the exact date, but sometime between 1884 and 1886, when Pope Leo XIII had just finished celebrating Mass, he had a mystical vision in which he saw demons gathering in Rome and heard the devil talking to Jesus.

According to the report, the devil was boasting that he could destroy the Church and demanded sufficient time to do so.

Supposedly, our Lord allowed the devil the space of a century in which to attempt to accomplish his evil agenda. This dialogue shook the Pope to his core, and he became extremely pale and afraid of what he had just heard.

When Pope Leo came out of his mystical vision, he immediately went to his desk and wrote down what we now know as the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. The Church greatly encourages the faithful to pray it as a protection from spiritual evil in our world.

Saint Michael 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.

BIBLE BASICS

Joshua 5:13-15 "While Joshua was near Jericho, he raised his eyes and saw one who stood facing him, drawn sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, 'Are you one of us or one of our enemies?' He replied, 'Neither. I am the commander of the army of the LORD: now I have come.'"

Exodus 23:23.25 "My angel will go before you and … you shall serve the LORD, your God; then he will bless your food and drink, and I will remove sickness from your midst."

Matthew 18:10 "See that you do not look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

This month's challenge is to nurture devotion to your guardian angel. Ask your angel to send you "into the breach" of the many challenges that are facing our Church and our culture so that you can be part of the solution. Together with your angel, pray for divine guidance to know God's will and to do it with zeal.

- California State Chaplain, **Fr. Antony Vazhappilly**

FAITH FUNDAMENTALS

The Ten Commandments

Whenever the Ten Commandments are displayed in courthouses, churches or other public places, they're usually presented as two stone tablets with three Roman numerals on the left and seven on the right. There's a reason for that unusual ordering.

The first tablet designates the three commandments that apply to God. The second tablet signifies the seven commandments that apply to our neighbor.

The *Catechism* calls the Ten Commandments "fundamental duties" (CCC, 2072) toward God and man. This is where God makes some basic demands on all His children, but His demands are hardly burdensome.

In eight out of ten cases, the commandments simply tell us *what to avoid* for our own good and the good of our neighbor!

In other words, "Thou shalt not…" is not God wagging His divine finger at us or threatening us if we don't get in line. It's Him *urging* us to avoid the things that kill our souls and destroy our relationships. These "negative" commandments are the bare minimum of what it means to live a moral life.

Here is a refresher course on God's Law:

1 – *"I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have any strange gods before Me."*
2 – *"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."*
3 – *"Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day."*
4 – *"Honor thy father and mother."*
5 – *"Thou shalt not kill."*
6 – *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."*
7 – *"Thou shalt not steal."*
8 – *"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."*
9 – *"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."*
10 – *"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."*

– FAITH IN ACTION –

FEATURED PROGRAM

INTO THE BREACH

Bishop Thomas Olmsted of the Diocese of Phoenix wrote a pastoral letter in 2015 issuing a "call to arms" for Catholic men to prepare for the challenges that modern culture presents to our faith. He focused specifically on our Catholic identity and the call to fidelity to the "faith of our fathers". He was essentially challenging Catholics to be not afraid to step into the immense problems of culture with the mindset and resources of the Catholic faith, which holds the key to so many problems of society today. Knights of Columbus councils around the country are instituting men's study groups to read the apostolic exhortation Into the Breach and to help deepen Catholic spirituality and formation to combat crisis of religious faith in our world.

CALENDAR OF FAITH | SEPTEMBER

SEP 3, *Fri*		St. Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor
SEP 8, *Wed*		Feast of the Birth of Mary
SEP 9 *Thu*		St. Peter Claver, Priest
SEP 12, *Sun*		Feast of the Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SEP 14, *Tue*		Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
SEP 15, *Wed*		Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows
SEP 16, *Thu*		Sts. Cornelius, Pope and Martyr, and Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr
SEP 17, *Fri*		St. Robert Bellarmine, Bishop and Doctor
SEP 19, *Sun*		St. Januarius, Bishop and Martyr
SEP 21, *Tue*		St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
SEP 23, *Thu*		St. Padre Pio, Priest
SEP 26, *Sun*		Sts. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs
SEP 28, *Tue*		Sts. Lorenzo Ruiz et al., Martyrs
SEP 29, *Wed*		Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels
SEP 30, *Thu*		St. Jerome, Priest and Doctor

CATECHISM CONNECTION

331 Christ is the center of the angelic world. They are His angels: "When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him..." (Mt 25:31).

They belong to Him because they were created through and for Him: "for in Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him" (Col 1:16).

336 From its beginning until death human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life" (St. Basil). Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God.

THE SCHOOL OF SAINTS

"I have great reverence for Saint Michael the Archangel; he had no example to follow in doing the will of God, and yet he fulfilled God's will faithfully."
~ St. Faustina Kowalska

"When tempted, invoke your Angel. He is more eager to help you than you are to be helped! Ignore the devil and do not be afraid of him: He trembles and flees at the sight of your Guardian Angel." *~ St. John Bosco*

"How happy is that guardian angel who accompanies a soul to Holy Mass!" *~ St. John Vianney*