

(Sept. 23rd – 24^h)

The Seven Archangels

The Archangels have played an important role in the Bible and in other Jewish and Christian literature for many centuries. Based on Scripture from Tobit 12:15; Revelation 1:4, 20; 3:1; 8:2, 6 and Isaiah 63:9, the Church has determined there are seven Archangels. Their names are Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Zerachiel, Remiel. Since the Council of Rome in 745, the Catholic Church acknowledges only the names of three of the Archangels...Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. The names of the others appear in Jewish and Christian sources outside the canon of Sacred Scripture.

Michael. Michael's name means "Who is like God". He has been traditionally referred to as the Prince/Guardian Angel of the people of Israel and is revered as the Guardian Angel of the Church. He led the forces of Heaven in casting out Satan when he rebelled against God. Rev. 12:7-9 He has always been revered as the greatest of all the angels, the Prince of the Heavenly Hosts, a title with real authority in the angelic hierarchy.

Gabriel. Gabriel's name has several meanings: "Strength of God", "Hero of God", "God has shown Himself Mighty", or summed up as "God is My Strength." Gabriel is God's holy messenger, appearing to Daniel to explain a vision from God (Dn 8); to Zechariah to announce he would have a son, John the Baptist (Lk1) and to Mary in the Annunciation (Lk 1). Tradition indicates that Gabriel was also the angel who appeared to St. Joseph in his dreams (Mt 1, 2) and that he was the Guardian Angel of Jesus and the Holy Family. Some sources also say he appeared to Mary before the Assumption, to indicate to her what would occur.

Raphael. Raphael's name means "Healing Power of God." He thus is revered as the Archangel of Healing. "Disguised as a human in the Book of Tobit, Raphael refers to himself as "Azarias the son of the great Ananias" and travels alongside Tobit's son, Tobiah. Once Raphael returns from his journey with Tobiah, he declares to Tobit that he was sent by the Lord to heal his blindness and deliver Sarah, Tobiah's future wife, from the demon Asmodeus. It is then that his true healing powers are revealed and he makes himself known as "the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord.'" (Tb 12:15). [From Saints & Angels, Catholic Online]

The Archangels can come to our aid and we are encouraged to ask for their intercession and guidance. We can ask for their intercession to God for their protection by means of the Grace of God working through them and for their guidance as we strive to emulate their examples. Their feast day is September 29.

Judy Pearson

