

September 29<sup>th</sup> is the Memorial of the Archangels. Michael is the patron of security forces and of the sick; Gabriel is the patron of telecommunications and the Postal Service; Raphael is the patron of travelers and the blind.

Saint Gregory tells us that “the word “angel” denotes a function ... they can only be called angels when they deliver some message. Moreover ... those who proclaim messages of supreme importance are called archangels.”<sup>i</sup>

Michael’s name means “Who is like God?” Michael is sent when wondrous power is required “so that his action and his name may make it clear that no one can do what God does by his superior power.”<sup>ii</sup>

- In the Book of Daniel, the Archangel Michael protects Israel. “The prince of the kingdom of Persia stood in my way for twenty-one days, until finally Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me” (10:13).
- So to, in the book of Revelation. When Satan opposes God and his people, “then Michael and his angels cast the dragon and his angels out of heaven” (Rev 12:7–9).
- As patron of the sick, he appeared in Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and stopped a plague.
- He came to the aid of Joan of Arc as she fought to save France from England during the Hundred Years War.<sup>iii</sup>

Gabriel whose name means “God’s Strength” or “God is my Warrior.” Gabriel announces the greatest message of all. God will be with us. Jesus, the Son of God, will also be the Son of Mary. He comes to Zechariah and announces the birth of John the Baptist. And in the Book of Daniel, he helps Daniel to interpret a vision about the end of time when God will sit in judgment of the wicked (8:16).

Raphael means God’s remedy. He is a matchmaker helping to arrange the marriage of Sarah and Tobias. He is a protector who advises about the use of the fish liver and heart to make the demon flee. He also offers advice for the honeymoon so that bride and groom will pray for mercy and protection.<sup>iv</sup> He is a healer. “When he touched Tobit’s eyes in order to cure him, he banished the darkness of his blindness.”<sup>v</sup>

As messengers of God, we can take comfort that God protects us. Through the Archangel Michael he reassures us that God is most powerful and that all of the evil we see in this world will be vanquished. Through the Archangel Gabriel, God reassures us that he is with us to the end of time. Through the Archangel Raphael, God reassures us of the holiness of marriage, of the efficacy of prayer, and that with God’s help, any spiritual blindness that we have may one day give way to the Eternal Light.

God’s messengers of love,  
They come from realms of peace above,  
From homes of never-fading light,  
From blissful mansions ever bright.  
They come to watch around us here  
To soothe our sorrow, calm our fear.<sup>vi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Office of Readings from St Gregory

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid, Gregory.

<sup>iii</sup> Hahn, Scott. Catholic Bible Dictionary: Michael.

<sup>iv</sup> Hahn, Scott. Catholic Bible Dictionary: Raphael.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid, Gregory.

<sup>vi</sup> Hymn from the Breviary