

**ST. MICHAEL THE ARCH ANGEL
PATRON SAINT OF POLICE OFFICERS**



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St. Michael, the Archangel - Feast day - September 29th The name Michael signifies "Who is like to God?" and was the war cry of the good angels in the battle fought in heaven against Satan and his followers. Holy Scripture describes St. Michael as "one of the chief princes," and leader of the forces of heaven in their triumph over the powers of hell. He has been especially honored and invoked as patron and protector by the Church from the time of the Apostles.

Although he is always called "the Archangel," the Greek Fathers and many others place him over all the angels - as Prince of the Seraphim. St. Michael is the patron of police.

Michael is often referred to as "Saint Michael", a title that does not indicate canonisation, any more than it does for Saint Peter and Saint Paul. He is generally referred to in Christian litanies as "Saint Michael", as in the Litany of the Saints. In the shortened version of this litany used in the Easter Vigil, he alone of the angels and archangels is mentioned, omitting Saint Gabriel and Saint Raphael.

In the teachings of the church, Saint Michael has four main roles or offices. His first role is the leader of the Army of God and the leader of heaven's forces in their triumph over the powers of hell. He is viewed as the angelic model for the virtues of the *spiritual warrior*, with the conflict against evil at times viewed as the *battle within*.

The second and third roles of Michael in church teachings deal with death. In his second role, Michael is the angel of death, carrying the souls of all the deceased to heaven. In this role, at the hour of death, Michael descends and gives each soul the chance to redeem itself before passing, thus consternating the devil and his minions. Prayers often refer to this role of Michael. In his third role, he weighs souls in his perfectly balanced scales (hence Michael is often depicted holding scales).

In his fourth role, St Michael, the special patron of the Chosen People in the Old Testament, is also the guardian of the Church; it was thus not unusual for the angel to be revered by the military orders of knights during the Middle Ages. This role also extends to his being the patron saint of a number of cities and countries.

Roman Catholicism includes traditions such as the *Prayer to Saint Michael* which specifically asks for the faithful to be "defended" by the saint. It should be noted that the Roman Catholic traditions and teachings concerning St. Michael the Archangel are *not* required beliefs and practices but rather are strongly encouraged as a means of individuals and congregations increasing in spiritual strength against evil.

Prayer: St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.