

*"Michael and his angels battled against the dragon."*

# Saint Michael the Archangel

## POPE LEO XIII'S VISION

The story is told by a cardinal who knew the private secretary of Pope Leo XIII. During a celebration of Holy Mass between 1884-1886, the Pontiff was overtaken by a terrible vision.

"Pope Leo XIII truly had a vision of demonic spirits, who were gathering on the Eternal City. From that experience ... comes the prayer which he wanted the whole Church to recite."

The Pope composed and instituted in 1886 what are known as the "Leonine Prayers", recited at the end of low Mass, with a prayer to the Archangel.

While the details of the

vision remain obscure, the central truth that Pope Leo XIII saw the terrible power of evil and its diabolical threat to the whole Church.

While the threats which encircled the Church and society over 100 years ago have given way to new challenges and temptations today, the prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel remains a part of the Church's spiritual tradition and a powerful invocation against the Evil One who seeks to discourage and destroy the members of the Church in many ways. With great confidence we confess that Michael still is on our side.



*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 through the world  
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.*

## BISHOP ASKS ALL PARISHES TO PRAY SAINT MICHAEL PRAYER

*"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people."*

At the regular meeting of the Priest Council on December 13, 2018, Bishop Gainer began a discussion regarding the use of the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel at parish

Masses. Bishop Gainer was responding to multiple requests from clergy and lay faithful alike to reestablish the place of this prayer in parish life. There are several parishes who

already have found a place for the prayer in their liturgical life.

Therefore, Bishop Gainer asks that all parishes introduce the Prayer to Saint Michael

the Archangel at week-end Masses by the First Sunday of Lent, March 10, 2019. It is also worthy to introduce the prayer at weekday Masses.

Scriptural references  
to Michael the  
Archangel

**Daniel 10:12-13**— “Fear not, Daniel, from the first day you made up your mind to acquire understanding and humble yourself before God, your prayer was heard. Because of it I started out, but 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.”

**Daniel 12:1**— “At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book.”

**Jude 1:9**— “Yet the archangel Michael, when he argued with the devil in a dispute over the body of Moses, did not venture to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him but said, May the Lord rebuke you!”

**Revelation 12:7**— “Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels battled against the dragon.”

“May prayer strengthen us for the spiritual battle that the Letter to the Ephesians speaks of: ‘Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might’ (Ephesians 6:10). The Book of Revelation refers to this same battle, recalling before our eyes *the image of Saint Michael the Archangel* (cf. Revelation 12:7). Pope Leo XIII certainly had this picture in mind when, at the end of the last century, he brought in, throughout the Church, a special prayer to Saint Michael. ... Although this prayer is no longer recited at the end of Mass, I ask everyone not to forget it and to recite it to obtain help in the battle against the forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world.”

— John Paul II, *Regina Caeli*, 24 April 1994

## Pope Francis: The Christian life is a battle against evil

*One never goes alone* to the Baptismal font, but is accompanied by the prayers of the entire Church, as recalled in the litanies of the Saints which precede the Prayer of Exorcism and the Anointing Before Baptism, with which the catechumens are anointed with oil. These are gestures which, from antiquity, assure those who are preparing to be reborn as children of God that the prayers of the Church assist them in the battle against evil, accompany them on the path of good, help them elude the power of sin in order to enter into the kingdom of divine grace. The prayers of the Church. The Church prays, and prays for everyone, for all of us! We, the Church, pray for others. It is a beautiful thing to pray for others. Often, we have no urgent need and we do not pray. United to the Church, we must pray for others... Do not forget: the Church’s prayers are always in action. But we must enter into this prayer and pray for all the People of God and for those who need prayers. For this reason, the path of adult catechumens is marked by repeated exorcisms pronounced by the priest (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1237), that is, prayers which invoke liberation from sin and from everything which separates us from Christ and prevents intimate union with him. For children too, we ask God to free them from original sin and to consecrate their dwelling in the Holy Spirit (cf. *Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 49). ...

As the Gospels attest, Jesus himself fought and cast out the demons to manifest the advent of the Kingdom of God (cf. Mt 12:28): his victory over the power of the evil one leaves room for the Lordship of God who brings joy and reconciles with life. Baptism is not a magical formula but a *gift of the Holy Spirit* who enables those who receive him to ‘*fight against the spirit of evil*’, believing that God has sent his son into the world to destroy the power of Satan and to transfer mankind from darkness into the Kingdom of infinite light (cf. *Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 49). We know from experience that Christian life is always sub-

ject to temptation, especially to the temptation to separate oneself from God, from his will, from communion with him, to fall again into the snares of worldly seductions. And Baptism prepares us. It gives us strength for this daily struggle, even for the battle against the devil who, as Saint Peter says, tries to devour us, to destroy us like a lion.

In addition to prayer, there is also the anointing of the breast of catechumens with oil: “it strengthens the candidates with the power to renounce the devil and sin before they go to the font of life for rebirth” (*Blessing of Oils and Chrism*, Introduction n. 2). Due to the ability of oil to penetrate and benefit bodily tissues, combatants in ancient times would spread oil over their bodies to tone their muscles and to escape more easily from the grip of their adversary. In light of this symbolism, Christians in the early centuries adopted the use of anointing the bodies of Baptismal candidates with oil blessed by the Bishop to show through this “sign of salvation” that the power of Christ the Savior strengthens us to fight against evil and defeat it” (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 87).

It is tiring to fight against evil, to escape its deceit, to regain strength after an exhausting battle, but we must know that all of Christian life is a battle. We must also know, however, that we are not alone, that Mother Church prays so that her children, reborn in Baptism, do not succumb to the snares of the evil one but overcome them through the power of the Paschal Christ. Fortified by the Risen Christ who defeated the prince of this world (cf. Jn 12:31), we too can repeat with the faith of Saint Paul: “I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). We all can overcome, overcome anything, but with the strength that comes from Jesus.

— General Audience: April 25, 2018