



A Rosary to the Angels



M SHALOM



Chaplet of the Angels

SHALOM

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Address of Blessed Pope John Paul II

during his visit to the Shrine
of St. Michael at Monte Gargano
on May 24, 1987

My dear Brothers and Sisters!

I am delighted to find myself in your midst, in the shadow of this Sanctuary of St. Michael the Archangel which, for fifteen centuries, has been the goal of pilgrimages and a reference point for those who seek God and wish to follow Christ, through whom “all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities” (Col 1:16).

[...] From the time that Pope Gelasius I assented, in 493, to the dedication of the grotto of the apparitions of St. Michael as a place

of worship and paid his first visit here, granting the indulgence of the "Angelic Pardons," a series of Roman Pontiffs have followed in his footsteps to honor this sacred place.

[Among the many visits] one [...] which has rightly remained famous and still vivid was that made by St Francis of Assisi, who came here to prepare for Lent in 1221.

Tradition holds that, considering himself unworthy to enter the sacred grotto, he stopped at the entrance and carved a Sign of the Cross on a stone.

This lively and uninterrupted flow of illustrious and humble pilgrims—which from the early Middle Ages to our day has made this sanctuary a place of prayer and reaffirmation of the Christian faith—shows how much the figure of the Archangel Michael, the protagonist in many pages of the Old and New Testaments, is felt and invoked by the people and how much need the Church has of his heavenly protection. Of him, who is presented in the Bible as the great warrior against the Dragon, the leader of the demons, we read in the Book of Revelation:

“Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (Rev 12:7-9).

With this dramatic description, the sacred author presents us with the fall of the first angel, who was seduced by the ambition to become “like God.” Whence the reaction of the Archangel Michael, whose Hebrew name “Who is like God?”, affirms the uniqueness of God and his inviolability.

As fragmentary as it is, the evidence of Revelation concerning the personality and the role of St Michael is very eloquent. He is the Archangel (cf. Jude 1:9) who affirms the inalienable rights of God. He is one of the princes of heaven (cf. Dan 12:1)—charged with guarding the Chosen People—from whom the Savior will come.

Now the new People of God is the Church. That is the reason she considers him her protector and support in all her struggles for the defense and expansion of the kingdom of God on earth. It is true that “the powers of death shall not prevail,” as the Lord assured (Mt 16:18), but this does not mean that we are exempt from trials and battles against the snares of the evil one.

In this struggle, the Archangel Michael stands alongside the Church to defend her against all the iniquities of the age, to help believers to resist the devil who “prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” (1 Petr 5:8).

This battle against the devil which characterizes the Archangel Michael is still going on, because the devil is still alive and at work in the world. In fact, the evil that is in it, the disorder we see in society, the infidelity of man, the interior fragmentation of which he is a victim, are not merely the consequences of original sin, but also the effect of the dark and infesting activity of Satan, of this saboteur of man’s moral equilibrium. St Paul does not hesitate to