

29 September

Michael and All Angels

The Lord commanded his angels to keep you in all your ways.

There was silence in heaven while the dragon waged war; and Michael and his angels fought against him, and won the victory.

Then I saw an angel, soaring in the heavens, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to all who live on the earth.

Everlasting God, you have ordained and constituted the ministries of angels and mortals in a wonderful order: grant that as your holy angels always serve you in heaven, so, at your command, they may help and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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Church of England

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Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel are the four named biblical angels, depicted as the beloved messengers of God. Michael, which means 'who is like God?' is described as protector of Israel and leader of the armies of God and is perhaps best known for his victory over the dragon, which is told in the Revelation of John. He is thus regarded as the protector of Christians from the devil, particularly those at the hour of death. Gabriel, means, 'the strength of God', is the one who, in the Gospel according to Luke, is sent by God to Mary to announce the birth of Christ. Raphael, which means, 'the healing of God', is depicted in the Book of Tobit as the one who restores sight to Tobit's eyes. Uriel ('the light of God') appears in a vision to Ezra in 2 Esdras.

A basilica near Rome was dedicated in the 5th century in honour of Michael on 30 September, beginning with celebrations on the eve of that day and 29 September is now kept in honour of Michael throughout the western Church.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

4 October

Francis of Assisi

Friar, Deacon,

Founder of the Friars Minor 1226

O God, you ever delight to reveal yourself to the childlike and lowly of heart: grant that, following the example of the blessed Francis, we may count the wisdom of this world as foolishness and know only Jesus Christ and him crucified, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

4 October

Francis of Assisi

Francis was born in Assisi in central Italy either in 1181 or the following year. He was baptised Giovanni but given the name Francesco by his father, a cloth merchant who traded in France and had married a French wife. There was an expectation that he would eventually take over his father's business but Francis had a rebellious youth and a difficult relationship with his father. After suffering the ignominy of imprisonment following capture whilst at war with the local city of Perugia, he returned a changed man. He took to caring for disused churches and for the poor, particularly those suffering from leprosy. Whilst praying in the semi-derelict church of St Damian, he distinctly heard the words, 'Go and repair my church, which you see is falling down'. Others joined him and he prepared a simple gospel-based Rule for them all to live by. As the Order grew, it witnessed to Christ through preaching the gospel of repentance and emphasising the poverty of Christ as an example for his followers. Two years before his death, his life being so closely linked with that of his crucified Saviour, he received the Stigmata, the marks of the wounds of Christ, on his body. At his death, on the evening of 3 October 1226, his Order had spread throughout western Christendom.