



# ***SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL***

**PRIESTLY FRATERNITY SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL**





## ¿SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL?

What does the figure of Saint Michael the Archangel conjure up in our minds when we see him, sword upraised and the Devil prostrate at his feet? Surely it is of the conflict between good and evil. Saint Michael, whose name comes from the Hebrew signifying “Who is like God?” must be therefore the defender of good, or perhaps one should say, of sanctity; because since God is the Holy One, is pure holiness or sanctity, what we can say of Saint Michael is, inevitably, in created and angelic terms, a defender of this. This is what his name implies. So, in a few words, Saint Michael is the defender of the holiness of God.

We live in a world where mass media abounds and is abused by the spreading of lies and half-truths, which are frequently the best lies. For example, if a person were to confess that he had stolen a wallet, but omitted to mention that it contained a hundred dollar bill, he would be telling the truth, but not the whole truth—which is why in a court of law a witness is required to tell not only the truth, but the whole truth—. For us, God is the ultimate and absolute truth, though postmodern philosophy would have us believe that there is no absolute truth. If there is no ultimate and absolute truth, then it follows quickly that anything goes. Truth is replaced by caprice, by convenience, and so forth. But for the Christian, God is Truth, and since Saint Michael is “Who is like God?” he must be a defender of truth, and whoever adopts Saint Michael as his patron will inevitably have to do the same.

The defense of truth requires, understanding, justice and mercy. Saint Michael cannot be invoked as a kind of inquisitorial figure weighing in with an unsheathed sword to meet out death and destruction. Rather, the sword is the sword of truth, and also of understanding—cutting away all that is false—, of justice and of forgiveness. The result of his action is that there is clarity, so that truth, understanding, justice and forgiveness may prevail. If we understand this we can see that the Fraternity of Saint Michael the Archangel must bear witness to the truth in such a way that it is really evident. For truth to be seen in all its splendor, it must be like a jewel set with other precious stones, such as mercy and compassion. All too often, the defenders of a position that they consider to be the truth resort quickly to insults and shouting. The truth requires neither of these, but rational argument calmly presented. Saint Michael may lead an army and be armed with a sword, but it is not an army of ignorant beings armed with violence, but a saintly host armed with reason.

## PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL

In 1886 Pope Leo XIII instituted what would later be known as the “Leonine Prayers” after Mass (something familiar to those who have attended a Low Mass in the Extraordinary Form). These prayers include the well-known Prayer to St. Michael. Not much is known for certain about the origin of this prayer, but it is believed by many historians that Pope Leo had a profound vision that sparked its creation.

According to Kevin Symonds, author of *Pope Leo XIII and the Prayer to St. Michael*, the vision likely occurred between 1884 and 1886 and took place during the celebration of Mass. Several different reports relate that Pope Leo had a visible change come over his face during the vision and one claims that his face was “pale and fearful.”

A cardinal at the time who knew the pope’s private secretary explains that “Pope Leo XIII truly had a vision of demonic spirits, who were gathering on the Eternal City (Rome). From that experience ... comes the prayer which he wanted the whole Church to recite.”

Ever since Pope Leo XIII composed it, the St. Michael Prayer has continued to be a staple of Catholic prayer and is a prayer many exorcists recommend to anyone who needs to combat the presence of evil in their lives.

**SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL**  
**POPE LEO XIII**

Saint 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

