

CELTIC EVENING PRAYER
WITH THE ANGELS



ARCHANGEL RAPHAEL



*In the name of the sending Father,
in the name of the gentle Son,
in the name of the teaching Spirit,
in Love's name, the Three in One.*

WE PRAY

Heavenly Father,
you speak to us through angels,
you speak to us through dreams.

**Lord Jesus, open our hearts to your call.
Holy Spirit, give us grace to respond.**

You speak to us in nature,
you speak to us in prayer.
Lord Jesus, open our hearts to your call.
Holy Spirit, give us grace to respond.

You speak to us in the storm and in the silence,
you speak to us in the pattern of our lives.
Lord Jesus, open our hearts to your call.
Holy Spirit, give us grace to respond.
Amen.



Loving God, holy and immortal;
you are with us now in this holy place.
God of the stars, God of the angels;
you are with us now in this holy place.
God of the streets, God of the people;
you are with us now in this holy place.
Open our minds to your Truth,
our lips to your praise and
our hearts to your love.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Tobit 12 : 11-22

I will now declare the whole truth to you and will conceal nothing from you. Already, I have declared it to you when I said, 'It is good to conceal the secret of a king, but to reveal with due honour the works of God'. So now when you and Sarah prayed, it was I who brought and read the record of your prayer before the glory of the Lord and likewise whenever you would bury the dead. And that time when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your dinner to go and bury the dead

I was sent to you to test you. And at the same time, God sent me to heal you and Sarah your daughter-in-law. I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ready and enter before the glory of the Lord'. The two of them were shaken; they fell face down, for they were afraid. But he said to them, 'Do not be afraid; peace be with you. Bless God forevermore. As for me, when I was with you, I was not acting on my own will, but by the will of God. Bless him each and every day; sing his praises. Although you were watching me, I really did not eat or drink anything- but what you saw was a vision. So now get up from the ground and acknowledge God. See, I am ascending to him who sent me. Write down all these things that have happened to you.' And he ascended. Then they stood up and could see him no more. They kept blessing God and singing his praises and they acknowledged God for these marvellous deeds of his when an angel of God had appeared to them.



Mark 1 vv 21-32

They went to Capernaum and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him." News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

ARCHANGEL RAPHAEL

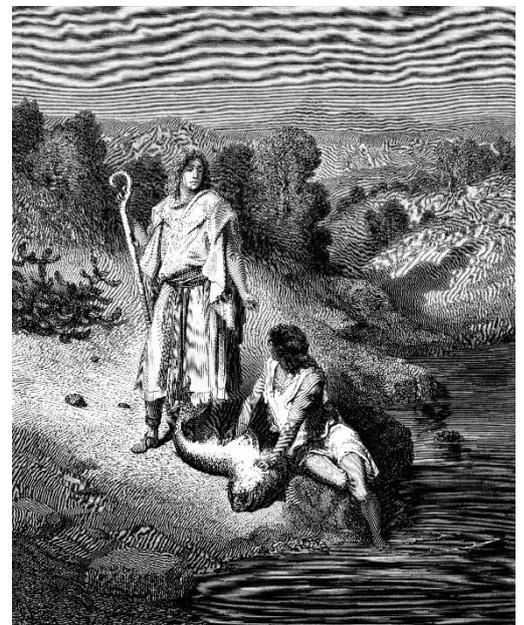
Raphael means ‘God heals’. As well as healing, he is the Archangel associated with guiding pilgrims and is often depicted with a staff or with a fish (denoting healing.)

References exist in the Protestant bible to Gabriel and Michael, but not Raphael. However, he appears in books of the Apocrypha – principally in Tobit (and also in Enoch). It is said that he announces his presence with dazzling sparkles of emerald light.

The most famous and dramatic story associated with Raphael appears in Tobit. In chapter 12, Raphael identifies himself as one of the seven archangels ‘who stand before the Lord’ and declares that he was sent by the Lord to heal Tobit of his blindness and deliver Sarah, his future daughter-in-law, from the demon Asmodeus. Blindness, as so often in the Bible, refers to both the physical and the spiritual. In our Gospel reading, we clearly see Jesus addressing both.

Tobit was a godly man, who stayed faithful to the Lord when his tribesmen deserted the faith and were sacrificing to graven images. One particular act he was noted for was burying the dead, who had been left to rot. He once even left his dinner table to do so. One night, he was sleeping in his courtyard by the wall and sparrows loosed their droppings in his eyes, which created a white film over them. The more he was treated by doctors, the more his vision was impaired. He was blind for 4 years.

He had given a nest egg to a relation in the distant village of Media to keep in trust. Sarah, who lived close to this relation and was to become his daughter-in-law, was plagued by a demon called Asmodeus: she had married 7 men, but on the wedding night, the demon killed them before consummation of the marriage. Simultaneously, both Tobit and Sarah went into their courtyard and upstairs room respectively and prayed to God for death. Having prayed for death, Tobit decides to send his son, Tobias, to his relative to retrieve the money left in trust. Tobias doesn’t know the way to this village, so Tobit sends him to look for someone to show him the way. He finds Raphael and introduces him to his father. Raphael tells him that the ‘time is near for God to heal him’.



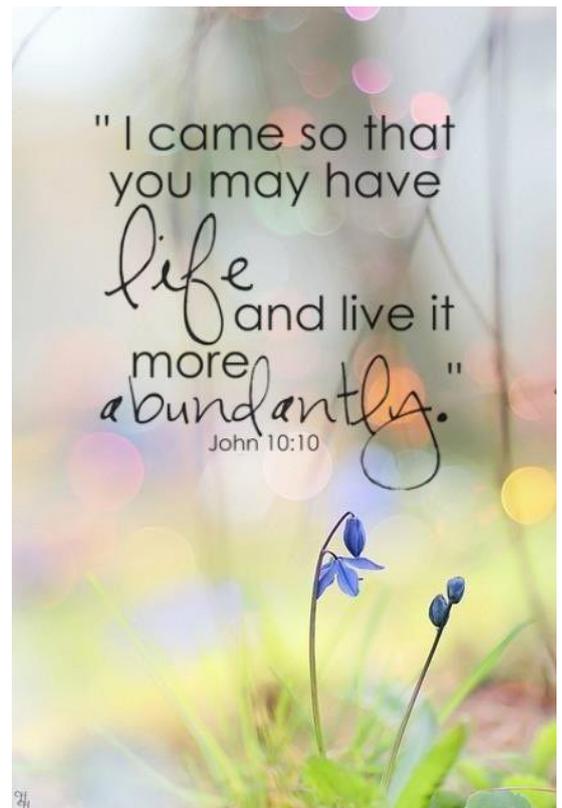
It is important to note that it is God who heals – Raphael is the agent.

On their journey to Media, Tobias catches a fish. Raphael tells him to save the fish's gall to rub on his father's eyes to cure his blindness. He then tells Tobias that he is to marry Sarah. Tobias is understandably perturbed, having heard about the demon, but Raphael tells him to 'take some of the fish's liver and heart and put them on the embers of the incense. An odour will be given off, the demon will smell it and flee and will never be seen near her again'. He also emphasises that Tobias and Sarah must pray to the Lord and ask for mercy and safety. Here we can clearly see healing linked with prayer.

So they marry and all is well and there is much rejoicing and feasting. They collect the nest egg and make their way home to Tobit. Raphael tells Tobias to go on ahead to heal his father's eyes, as instructed. More wedding celebrations ensue and finally, Raphael discloses to Tobit and Tobias (in our passage above) his true identity. The Celts would have loved this story, which brings together the supernatural and natural world. What is made very clear from Raphael's words is that he doesn't act on his own will, but by the will of God. He was sent by God. He exhorts them to always praise God and to give God the glory. Healing is never the result of human (or even angelic) power. The power resides in God, who may choose to use the agency of others.

REFLECTION

True healing is more than restoration of flesh and blood, or knitting of bone to bone – and indeed, it may preclude bodily healing. True healing is wholeness, where body, soul and spirit unite. True healing is peace in the knowledge of God's presence; a hope that knows no end. True healing cries 'Not my will, but yours.' True healing knows love perfectly, a love that casts out fear. True healing overcomes and endures for eternity.



A PRAYER FOR HEALING

**I bring to you my body, muscle and sinew, artery and vein,
bone and joint – the miracle that is me.**

**I bring to you my brokenness and ask for healing,
restoration, freedom to be the person I could be.**

**Today and all days,
embrace us in a love that knows no end.**

**Today and all days,
fill us with a power that overcomes.**

**Today and all days,
Encourage us with a word that nourishes.**

**Today and all days,
inspire us with a hope that sustains.**

**Today and all days,
Comfort us with a peace that endures.**

**Today and all days,
bring wholeness of body, mind and spirit.**

Today and all days.

Amen.

PRAYERS FOR OUR WORLD



We thank and praise you Lord for your healing – through angels, through people, through the comfort of feeling you hold us in our suffering.

As new waves of Corona virus once again threaten the stability of our world, we remember those who continue to live in hardship and distress due to the pandemic. We pray renewed hope for those who have lost their jobs, their homes, their security. We pray courage and strength for those who will suffer the long-term effects of the virus and we pray for those who remain dangerously ill. Give skill, compassion and resilience to all who are caring for the sick and your wisdom to those developing a vaccine.

Loving Lord ... Hear our prayer

We pray peace for the poor of this world: that the workers who build houses for the rich will have a roof over their heads, that farm labourers, whose sweat has watered the fields will have food on their tables. Prosper the work of Fairtrade organisations and guide us to make choices that support those with so little.

Loving Lord ... **Hear our prayer**

We pray healing for relationships that are broken. We pray for children unwanted by their parents and parents alienated from their children, family members estranged from one another, those with whom we cannot see eye to eye. In our homes and families, our churches and workplaces, our country and our world, may love be shared among us, bringing hope and healing.

Loving Lord ... **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for your Church throughout the world as it marches on through ever-changing and uncertain times. – as it has always done – in the power of your presence. We pray especially for our churches here in Mount's Bay and ask your blessing on our worshipping community, wherever we come before you.

Loving Lord ... **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we place into your gentle, hands those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit. Be present to them through family, friends and angels. Touch with your generous love those we name before you now.....

Loving Lord ... **Hear our prayer.**

We remember before you those whose earthly journey is over. Those to whom you gave breath and whom you receive into eternal peace. In a moment of silence, we remember those for whom we keep a light in our heart

Loving Lord... **Hear our prayer.**

Lord,

We do not know how you use our prayers in the mystery of healing, but we trust that through them, we may play a part in your redeeming work in the world.

We humbly offer them in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.



LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING PRAYER

You speak to your people through angels.
**Keep our ears and eyes open
to the whisper of angel voices.**

Angels come among us
And many have entertained them unawares.
**Keep us watchful and waiting
for the spirit beings in our midst;
teach us to recognise them
in all their disguises.**

Angels, come among us.
Their presence comforting or disquieting.
**Make us sensitive to their presence,
feeling them guiding us into the future,
leading us to heaven,
where we shall see and hear clearly
what we have glimpsed in shadow.
Amen.**

BLESSING

**May holy Raphael bring us healing.
May holy Gabriel bring us hope.
May holy Michael bring us peace
and until we meet again,
may you and those you love and pray for
rest in the Light, Love and Presence of the Lord.
Amen.**

