

CELTIC EVENING PRAYER
WITH THE ANGELS



ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

WE GATHER IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER
God and Creator,
the One who loves us and calls us into being.
The One whose glory is reflected in a human being fully alive.

WE GATHER IN THE NAME OF THE SON
Saviour and Lord,
Divine Healer,
whose power confronted evil and whose touch brought peace.

WE GATHER IN THE NAME OF THE SPIRIT
Holy and powerful,
gathering all into the shadow of Her wings:
Breath of God; Fire of God's love;
drawing us into wholeness –
into the heart and life of God.
Amen.

OPENING PRAYERS

**O Michael of the angels and the righteous in heaven,
shield thou my soul with the shade of your wing;
shield thou my soul on earth and in heaven;
from foes upon earth,
from foes beneath earth,
from foes in concealment.
Protect and encircle my soul 'neath thy wing.
Oh my soul with the shade of thy wing.**

Amen.

(Carmina Gadelica 111, 149)



Lord of all,
in You, has all life existed from the beginning;
there is nothing which exists beyond Your presence
or outside Your love.

**For You, who are infinite, our timescales are as nothing;
our lives are like a breath, a blade of grass,
a fleeting dream in the night.**

All too soon, we return to the earth, of which we are a part,
like a flower, withering and dying.

**We are powerless before the grip of death,
which comes to us all.**

Teach us to value every single day and to grow in wisdom,

**that we may find reason to give thanks,
marvelling that You know each of us, that You love us in all our fragility
and offer the promise of eternal life.**

Amen.

SCRIPTURE

John 11 : 17-26

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

1 Corinthians 15 :53-57

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ.

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

Along with Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel, St Michael is one of the 4 archangels revered in Christian tradition. But he is the only angel mentioned in the sacred texts of Christians, Jews and Muslims. Michael, whose name means 'one who is like God', is known as a divine messenger, a protector of the faithful and the angel who guides our souls upon death. He is traditionally known as the commander-in-chief of the heavenly host and a strong warrior, fighting evil. He is often depicted with a sword in his hand, subduing a dragon or snake beneath his feet. Michael represents divine strength and courage in the face of evil. He protects people who love God and is powerfully concerned with truth and justice. It is said that a deep blue light accompanies the appearances of St Michael.



St Michael has held a special place of honour and reverence in the Celtic Christian tradition – particularly among those who live close to the sea shore and rocky crags of the ocean. He was seen as one who dwells in the midst of the wild energy of sea and wind. Mont St Michel in France, Skellig Michael, off the Irish coast and our own St Michael's Mount are named after him. He was said to have appeared to fishermen over the Mount, as depicted in Zoe Cameron's painting in Marazion church. Michael represented risk-taking energy, offered on behalf of others. He was invoked on journeys, on pilgrimage and during the process of dying – which was regarded by Celts as the ultimate journey.

Among the Celtic peoples, there was a clear awareness that, even though creation is good and comes from God's own goodness, evil is in the world. They understood that the gracious gift of free will brings with it the risk of our choosing evil. Michael was invoked as a defender of body and soul from forces within and without. As an angel of God, Michael rides the winds of God's creative goodness, serving the living Christ, the Word, through whom all comes to be. He accompanies us in the twists of life's journey and the passage of death, sometimes known in the Celtic tradition as 'the river that is hard to see.' He is with us at the beginning and with us at the end. St Michael is remembered on 29th September (Michaelmas). Let's reflect on the prayer within the words of this moving sonnet by Malcolm Guite:

REFLECTION

MICHAELMAS

Michaelmas gales assail the waning year
and Michael's scale is true, his blade is bright.
He strips dead leaves and leaves the living clear
to flourish in the touch and reach of light.
Archangel bring your balance, help me turn
upon this turning world with you and dance
in the Great Dance. Draw near, help me discern
and trace the hidden grace in change and chance.
Angel of fire, Love's fierce radiance,
drive through the deep until the steep waves part.
Undo the dragon's sinuous influence
and pierce the clotted darkness of my heart.
Unchain the child you find there, break the spell
and overthrow the tyrannies of hell.



PRAYER

(Celtic, traditional)

O Michael Militant, thou king of the angels,
shield thy people with the power of thy sword.

**Spread thy wing over land and sea,
east and west and shield us from the foe.**

Be with us in the pilgrimage and in the twistings of the fight.

**Thou chief of chiefs, thou chief of the needy,
be with us in the journey
and in the gleam of the river.**

**Thou chief of angels, spread thy wing over sea and land
send evil to the deep and encircle my heart with light.**

Keep hatred without and love within.

Amen.

PRAYERS FOR THE 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.

We place into your hands those in need throughout the world - each and every
one known to you. We are here, with you, for them:

We pray for people whose humanity is denied by others – for those persecuted
because of their religion or ethnicity. We remember muslims in China and
Myanmar, our fellow Christians in the Middle East and Asia. We hear reports of
such cruelty, that we struggle to see an end to the evil that pervades your
beautiful creation. Send out a gentle breeze, Lord, on the dry ground of our doubt
and prepare us to be bearers of peace and reconciliation in all our relationships.

Loving Lord **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose relationships have been broken, whether through separation, divorce or bereavement. We pray for children unwanted by their parents and parents alienated from their children, family members estranged from one another. 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 continue to pray for all those affected by the pandemic and those who care for them. We ask that a vaccine may soon be found and the virus brought under control. Loving Lord ... **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we place into your gentle, hands those who are ill and suffering in body, mind or spirit. Touch with your generous love those we name before you now or hold silently in our hearts Loving Lord ... **Hear our prayer.**

We remember before you those whose earthly journey is over. Those who have crossed the 'river that is hard to see', 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.**

May holy Michael bring peace in a troubled world

May holy Gabriel bring hope in a suffering world

May holy Raphael bring healing to those who hurt

You have promised that the day will come when sorrow and death will be no more. Until that glorious day, help us to work for peace, to grow your kingdom, to learn the lessons of the past and put our faith in your future.

We humbly offer our prayers in the name of the source of all life and hope – our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING PRAYER

In hope and disappointment,
in faith and fear
Lord, send us an angel to bring your light.

When the world wearies us,
when we trudge on a treadmill, but long to dance under the stars,
Lord, send us an angel to lighten our feet.

When life seems to throw at us the opposite of our desires,
when we ask, 'How will I cope? How will they manage?'
Lord, send us an angel to lighten our load.

When we cannot see beyond the hurdles in our way
and the past seems a safer place than the future,
Lord, send us an angel light up our way.

You speak to your people through angels.
Keep us ever open to the whisper of angel voices.
Amen.

BLESSING

May holy Michael bring you peace.
May holy Gabriel bring you hope.
May holy Raphael bring you healing.
And until we meet again,
may you be held in the Light, Love and Presence of the Lord.
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you and those you love, today and always.
Amen.

