



A Catholic Magazine on the Holy Angels | Vol 13 • issue 3 • 2022 | £ 2,50 € 3,00 \$ 7,00 | ISSN 2081-5077

# The Angels

Messengers from a loving God



**St Michael  
visits Scotland**  
– precious days of grace

**Highway to heaven**  
– Eucharist in the life  
of Bl. Carlo Acutis

**The Majestic  
Splendour  
of St Michael**

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the angelic wings**  
– interview with citizens  
of Monte Sant'Angelo



## Angels and St Michael are the army of God

Sometimes we say "Someone tells me this or that..." No, not someone, but St Michael. Angelic inspirations are not fluids or energies that we bring down to earth by means of some seances or spells. The difference between an angel and a human is that an angel's free will was not distorted by sin and egoism. An angel is a supernatural being and does not have a body because he was not born but created. Being an angel they possess these three gifts and we need a personal relationship with him. If I say "St Michael", he would say "Are you calling me, Peter? What is the matter? How can I help you? Why are you calling me?" It is a meeting of two hearts. That is how each person should pray to the angels.

We associate angels with singing, at times they are depicted in paintings with instruments. During the Holy Mass we join them with the singing of the preface "Holy, Holy, Holy". But angels are not only vocalists and instrumentalists. They are also soldiers. St Michael is also depicted as a soldier. Angels are the Army of God. The human army usually divides into platoons and companies and similarly the army of angels into choirs, legions and hosts. St Michael generally appears armed with a sword in his hand.

In the prayer of Pope Leo XIII, we say: "and do thou, O Prince of the



heavenly host, by the Divine Power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen." I emphasise "by the Divine Power of God" because we need to understand this clearly. At different statues of St Michael, we can see that St Michael has great power and the Evil is surrendering to him. We need to remember that St Michael does not act with his own power but with the power of God.

He always humbles himself before God who is his Lord and Creator. St Michael would like us to know him, to share the power with us and, lead us to happiness - understood as living in a deep, intimate relationship with the Living God.

Think of these words. Look around you. Open the eyes of your soul and notice your invisible friends and allies given to us by God that are saintly angels and, particularly, St Michael the Archangel.

God bless you.

Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA  
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## The Angels

Messengers from a loving God

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# The Holy Eucharist

**The celebration of this Most Holy Mystery, to offer it to God along with the priest as a sacrifice for their own salvation and that of the whole world, and to use it as spiritual nourishment.**

**F**or if the sacred liturgy holds first place in the life of the Church, then the Eucharistic Mystery stands at the heart and centre of the liturgy, since it is the font of life that cleanses us and strengthens us to live not for ourselves but for God and to be united to each other by the closest ties of love.

## Daily Mass and Holy Communion

It is desirable to have the faithful in large numbers take an active part in the sacrifice of the Mass each and every day and receive the nourishment of Holy Communion with a pure and holy mind and offer fitting thanks to Christ the Lord for such a great gift.

They should remember these words: “The desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church to see all the faithful approach the sacred banquet each and every day is based on a wish to have them all united to God through the Sacrament and to have them draw from it the strength to master their passions, to wash away the lesser sins that are committed every day and to prevent the serious sins to which human frailty is subject.” (67) And they should not forget about paying a visit during the day to the Most Blessed Sacrament in the very special place of

honour where it is reserved in churches in keeping with the liturgical laws, since this is a proof of gratitude and a pledge of love and a display of the adoration that is owed to Christ the Lord who is present there.

## Dignity bestowed by Eucharist

No one can fail to see that the divine Eucharist bestows an incomparable dignity upon the Christian people.

For it is not just while the Sacrifice is being offered and the Sacrament is being confected, but also after the Sacrifice has been offered and the Sacrament confected—while the Eucharist is reserved in churches or oratories—that Christ is truly Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” For He is in the midst of us day and night; He dwells in us with the fullness of grace and of truth. (68) He raises the level of morals, fosters virtue, comforts the sorrowful, strengthens the weak and stirs up all those who draw near to Him to imitate Him, so that they may learn from his example to be meek and humble of heart, and to seek not their own interests but those of God.

Anyone who has a special devotion to the sacred Eucharist and



Maria Oswald, www.unsplash.com

who tries to repay Christ's infinite love for us with an eager and unselfish love of his own, will experience and fully understand—and this will bring great delight and benefit to his soul—just how precious is a life hidden with Christ in God (69) and just how worthwhile it is to carry on a conversation with Christ, for there is nothing more consoling here on earth, nothing more efficacious for progress along the paths of holiness.

**Mysterium Fidei**  
**Encyclical of Pope Paul VI**  
**on The Holy Eucharist**  
 Numbers (2), (66), (67).  
[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

# His mercy shall go before me

**St Augustine was born in AD 354 in a small town in what is now Algeria, North Africa. His father was a pagan, but his mother was a devout Christian believer, later canonized and known to the whole Catholic world as St Monica.**

**A**s a young man, Augustine prepared for a career as a teacher of Rhetoric. He subsequently taught in Carthage and in Rome. At this time, he also carried out a passionate search for truth, a search which led him first into the religious sect called the “Manichees” and then into the philosophy of Plotinus.

In 386 he moved to Milan to teach, but, after hearing the inspired preaching of the Archbishop of Milan, St Ambrose, as well as the prayers of his saintly mother Monica, he was converted to the Christian faith in the summer of that same year. This conversion involved a profound inner struggle with sins of the flesh, as well as temptations to intellectual pride - a story recorded for posterity in his famous book *Confessions* in 397.

In 395 Augustine was named co-adjutor Bishop of Hippo in North Africa and bishop of the diocese a few years later.

## Intellectual development

St Augustine's intellectual development after his conversion can be

divided into several phases. In the first phase he was still a follower of the philosophy of Plotinus, as he sought to interpret and defend the Christian faith with the help of this philosophy. St Clement of Alexandria in the East had tried much the same thing. After he became a bishop, however, he became more interested in Scriptural exegesis, especially the letters of St Paul and the Psalms. Divine Revelation became for Augustine more than just the philosophy of Plotinus with the doctrine of Creation (*creatio ex nihilo*) and the Incarnation thrown in for good measure. Rather, in this period Augustine really began to plumb the depths of what it means for God's grace to come to the aid of a sinful soul, through prayer and the sacraments.

This is the period in his life that produced written works that “moderate Augustinians” would refer to so often. Here Augustine emphasized that God in His mercy always takes the initiative with the sinner, because the sinner is too weak even to stretch out his hands to God in prayer on his own. Augustine taught that salvation cannot be gained merely by the soul receiving proper moral and doctrinal instruction and by following the example of Jesus and the saints. Rather,

salvation involves the entire inner regeneration of the soul by divine grace, received as a free gift from God, through prayer and the sacraments of the Church.

The teachings of this period of St Augustine's life, such as his treatise “On Forgiveness and the Just Deserts of Sins and the Baptism of Infants” became standard fare for theology in the West, both Catholic and Protestant, and were largely endorsed by the western Council of Orange in 529.

## Divine Mercy

Reflections on Divine Mercy can be found in St Augustine's writings that come from this period of his life. For example, here is his commentary on Psalm 58, from the phrase in the Latin Vulgate version of the Psalm, “my God is my mercy”:

‘Lastly, considering that every type of good thing we may possess - either as gifts of nature, or through education or social relationships, or through the gifts of faith, hope and charity, or moral goods such as justice, or fear of God - are nothing but [God's] gifts, [the Psalmist] concludes thus: “My God is my mercy”.... Now, since none



is better than You, none more powerful than You, and none is more generous in mercy than You from whom I received that I be, from You I received [the grace] that I be good.'

Later in his life, however, St Augustine's view of human nature and its corruption took a more pessimistic turn. It is not hard to see the roots of his discouragement with the human species. For example, as Bishop of Hippo he had to contend first with the Donatist schism, which split the North African church for over a century. Finally, forces of imperial coercion were called in to support the Catholic side in the dispute. Augustine's attempts to deal with this ecclesiastical conflict were long, tiring and somewhat futile. In the end, he reluctantly agreed to support the imperial policy of coercion, as long as it was limited to the use of pressure and "rebuke," rather than crude physical force. However, no sooner was the Donatist situation under control than Augustine faced another mounting problem, the Pelagian heresy, which denied the need for inner regeneration of the soul by God's invisible, divine

grace. This controversy would involve St Augustine in theological labours that would last most of the rest of his life.

## Barbarian invasions

In addition to these ecclesiastical and theological trials and tribulations, Augustine had to contend with the horrors of the barbarian invasions. The whole of western Roman civilization was rapidly crumbling around him. In 407 barbarian tribes overran Roman Gaul, then crossed into Spain in 409, bringing pillage, rape and murder, wherever they went. In 410 the city of Rome itself was sacked by Alaric and the Goths. Refugees poured into North Africa and the safer Christian East. To gain an appreciation of what Augustine and his fellow bishops had to face in those dark times, here is a passage from the historian Henry Chadwick's book *The Early Church* (Pelican edition, 1967, p. 224) that vividly describes the scene:

*'Augustine's last letters dealt with the problem of conscience - whether*

*clergy might join with the refugees and flee [the oncoming barbarian armies]. In Gaul and Spain, the bishops of many cities, such as Toulouse, had been the principal organizers of resistance to the invaders; but some bishops had gone with those who fled before the murdering, plundering hordes. What were the African clergy to do? Augustine did not want all the best priests to be lost in the oncoming massacre. Yet there was a clear duty to be there to minister to those who would be clamouring for baptism or for the Last Rites before the cruel invaders cut their throats. Augustine recommended that some should go and some should stay and, that to avoid invidious decisions, the clergy should cast lots. He himself stayed in Hippo for the Vandal siege, but died on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 430, before the barbarians broke through the defences.'*

It was in the midst of this dreadful situation that St Augustine finished writing his most famous work, *The City of God*, in which he tried to show that, although human history is a record of war and strife, still the city of God (the Kingdom of Heaven) endures and it is built up through the means of grace that God gives to us in the Church, which will abide forever and whose duty it is now to convert the barbarian invaders to the Christian faith.

This was also the time in Augustine's life when he put the final form on his doctrine of salvation, as a manifestation of the mercy of God. Whether or not Augustine's doctrine in this regard truly manifests God's merciful love in the way that he intended, however, remains a contentious theological point in the Christian world to this very day.

Let us return to the writings of the Patristic scholar Henry Chadwick



■ Conversion of Augustine by Fra Angelico, between 1430-1435

and his summary of St Augustine's fully developed doctrine of salvation. Chadwick writes in *The Early Church* (Pelican edition, 1967, p. 232):

*'According to the doctrine that Augustine opposed to the Pelagians, the entire [human] race fell in Adam... The transmission of hereditary sinfulness is bound up with the reproductive process. The general belief that virginity is a higher state than marriage proved for Augustine that the sexual impulse can never be free of some element of concupiscence. In any event, the practice of infant baptism for the remission of sins presupposes that infants arrive polluted by sin; since they have committed no actual sin, remission must be for the guilt attaching to a fault in their nature. Therefore, if babies die unbaptized, they are damned, even though [Augustine says] it will be a "very mild" form of damnation. Mankind is a lump of perdition - incapable, without redeeming grace, of any act of pure good will and all the virtues of the good pagan are vitiated by sin...*

*If all humanity were consigned to hell, that would be nothing but strict justice. Nevertheless, God's mercy is such that, inscrutably, He has chosen a fairly substantial minority of souls for salvation by a decree of predestination, which is antecedent to all differences of merit. To complain that this election is unjust is to fail to consider the gravity of the guilt attaching to original sin, and yet more to actual sin.*

*A necessary corollary of this doctrine of predestination is that [saving] grace is irresistible. If man is so corrupt that he no longer has free will to do good, grace must do all; and that this power is irresistible is a plain deduction from the divine decree of predestination, which otherwise would be*

*frustrated. It is the purpose of God to bring His elect, infallibly, to a certain end. Accordingly, the empirical test of the operation of grace lies in man's consistent goodness of character right through to the end of his life, a "final perseverance" which is a foreordained gift of God, independent of merit.'*

Suffice it to say that no theologian in the Catholic Church would subscribe to this full-blown Augustinian doctrine of salvation today (that is, assuming that Chadwick has accurately reported the teachings of the elderly St Augustine here, which may be open to scholarly dispute.) Nor did the Church ever officially endorse it. For example:

(a) The Church has never taught that the corruption of original sin is transmitted to each infant by the inordinate passions involved in the sexual intercourse that conceived her or him. (See *Catechism*, 402-406).

(b) The Church has certainly defined that the baptism of infants is a good ecclesiastical tradition, because it pours sanctifying grace into the child's soul right from the start of its earthly pilgrimage. This grace enables the infant to overcome the effects of its inheritance from Adam, that inner corruption of the human heart called "original sin" (*Catechism*, 1250). But the Church has never taught that the inheritance of "original sin" ascribes to each new generation that kind of guilt, which involves personal moral responsibility for that state of original sin, and therefore it would in no way be just for God to condemn unbaptized infants even to a mild form of "damnation" on account of an inherited sin that involved no voluntary fault on the part of the infants themselves. (*Catechism*, 1257-1261).

(c) The Church has always taught that, in order for us to be saved, our sinful souls, weakened and corrupted by original and actual sin, must be prompted, assisted, and strengthened by divine grace before we can do any good thing at all that leads toward salvation. But the Church has never taught that God's saving grace is irresistible. As the Council of Trent clearly taught, salvation is a work of grace, but it does not happen without the free consent of the souls of the elect. (*Catechism*, 1993 and 2002).

(d) The Church has never taught that the solid majority of the human race is destined for hell. The most one could say with any confidence is that only very few enter heaven immediately upon their death (Mt 7:13-14) and, therefore, vast numbers must have their purification completed in purgatory, by God's great mercy, before they are ready for heaven. (*Catechism*, 1030-1032).

## God's Merciful Love

Despite the extremes of St Augustine's teaching in his later years, however, we can still trace within his theology a deep appreciation for the merciful love of God. After all, since he sincerely believed that all human beings (apart from divine grace) are worthy of eternal damnation (even unbaptized infants), and since none of us has any capacity at all on our own to repent of our sins and seek divine aid and forgiveness, the fact that anyone at all repents and is saved can only be the work of God's merciful love, pouring out His saving grace upon those who do not deserve it.

Augustine's mature doctrine can be found in his *Enchiridion*





■ The City of God opening text, manuscript, circa 470 AD

(Handbook of Christian Doctrine on Faith, Hope and Love), written between 419 and 422. He starts at the section entitled “Faith in Christ the Redeemer” by apportioning credit (and blame) for the human condition:

*‘We must in no way doubt that the only cause of good things that come our way is the goodness of God, while the cause of our evils is the will of changeable good falling away from the unchangeable good, first the will*

*of an angel [Satan], and then the will of a human being [Adam].’*

God alone is the source of the regeneration and sanctification of the elect. Augustine quotes St Paul in Romans 9:16: “so it comes not from the one who runs, but from God who shows mercy.”

St Augustine also comments (section 32):

*‘Since there is no doubt whatever that a man, if he is already old enough to have the use of reason, cannot*

*believe, hope, or love unless he wills to do so, nor can he win the reward of God’s high vocation unless he runs it willingly, how can it depend not upon human will or exertion, but on the God who shows mercy, unless the will itself is prepared by the Lord?*

It remains for us to recognize that the words “So it comes not from the one who wills or runs, but from the God who shows mercy” are said truly, that all [glory] may be given to God, who makes the good will of man ready for His help and helps the will He has made ready.... For in Sacred Scripture we read both “His mercy shall go before me” (Ps 59:10) and “His mercy shall follow me” (Ps 23:6). It goes before the unwilling that they may will and it follows the willing, that they may not will in vain.’

For Augustine, the sending of Christ into the world was a gift of pure, undeserved grace (section 75):

*‘That one great sin [the fall of Adam] which was committed in a place and state of life of such happiness with the result that the whole human race was condemned originally and, so to say, at root in one man, is not undone and washed away except by the one mediator between God and humanity, the man, Christ Jesus, who alone was able to be born in such a way that he had no need to be reborn.’*

**Dr Robert Stackpole**

Director of the John Paul II

Institute of Divine Mercy,

an apostolate of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

Used with permission of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.



# Artists at the service of God (part 2)

Let's get to know the people behind the famous painting of the Divine Mercy.

## The Beginning

Statements by Fr Sopoćko, preserved on audiotape, show that he left Sister Faustina complete freedom when working jointly with the painter. At the same time, in statements and letters left behind, she personally confirms that the picture was painted exactly according to her instructions. The remarkable diligence in conveying the holy image of the Saviour is corroborated by the fact that the picture corresponds perfectly to the size of the figure on the Shroud of Turin.

In the entire history of apparitions, this is the only event ever known to man, where the Lord Jesus

expressed a wish to be depicted in an image.

He himself presented and accepted this visual image by repeatedly showing Sister Faustina his living presence in the form recreated in the painting. Moreover, by promising special favours for the worshippers of this image, he gave it an extraordinary religious value. Jesus told Sister Faustina:

"By means of this Image I shall be granting many graces to souls, so let every soul have access to it" (Diary, 570). And - "I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour

of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory" (Diary, 48).

Sister Faustina writes, "During prayer I heard these words within me, 'the two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water, which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood, which is the life of souls... These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross.

"These rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him. I desire that the first Sunday after Easter be the Feast of Mercy" (Diary, 299).



■ First public veneration of the Divine Mercy Image in St Michael's Church (right of the altar) in Vilnius, Lithuania

■ The picture (high above the altar) in the church in Nowa Ruda (later changed into a warehouse), Lithuania



## The Image from Vilnius

During the war, small copies of this Divine Mercy image in the form of cards and pictures were distributed among people suffering from war atrocities. It is estimated that over 150,000 copies were produced between 1940-1945.

After the war, the borders of Poland changed. Areas of today's Lithuania were incorporated into the USSR. One result of this was that Church Authorities called Fr Michael Sopoćko to Białystok, a city within Polish borders. Under the communist regime, a process of atheisation began. Religious veneration or devotion was forbidden. Many churches closed. The church of St Michael the Archangel in the Old Town in Vilnius was not spared. At first, it was thought the original painting of the Merciful Jesus had been destroyed, stolen or exported. This had happened to many other paintings. Fortunately, the painting was missed by the occupiers and remained in the empty church.

In 1956 two women were passing by the church of St Michael and noticed it was not closed, so they entered. They saw the painting. After persuading the cleaner to sell it, the women hid the Divine Mercy image in an attic for a few years. Unfortunately, moisture and weather conditions devastated the painting to such an extent that it required complete restoration. This had to be done in secret due to communist persecutions. Within a year, the restored painting was presented to the parish priest of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Vilnius. A year later, this holy image was transferred to the church in Nowa Ruda near Grodno.



■ Professional conservation in 2003

But in 1970 the communist authorities decided to change the church in Nowa Ruda into a warehouse. The priest and laypeople took out all religious items - apart from the painting. It was hung too high to take it down, so it stayed where it was for another sixteen years. However, there was continuous danger that one of the communist officers might be reminded of the painting and order for it to be destroyed.

So, in 1986, a secret copy of the painting was made to replace the original one still in the church/ warehouse. Under cover of darkness, the original painting was transported to the church of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius. Fearing the communists, the parish priest did not want to accept it in an official way, so he used a time of renovation to hang the painting. Eventually, the political situation drastically changed. Pope John Paul II was able to pray in front of this very image of our Merciful Lord in the church in Vilnius during his pilgrimage to Lithuania in 1993. In an address to the faithful, he referred to this image as "a holy image".

Conservationists are now dedicated to making sure the artwork is preserved for generations to come. They believe the look of the painting comes second to its preservation.

Unprofessional conservation and repainting had hidden for many years the artistic value of the work. For example, paraffin applied by one restorer had, to some extent, protected the painting from the effects of moisture, but it had also caused changes to its original colours. Only after thorough conservation in 2003 and removal of all repainting did the painting regain its original image. The subtle figure of the Merciful Saviour appears in a dark space, directing our attention to the rays of light of mercy flowing from His open Heart. The original painting of the Merciful Jesus has now been venerated at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Vilnius since 2005.

For almost forty years (1947-1986) the original painting of the Divine Mercy by Kazimirowski had been unavailable for the faithful and pilgrims to see, but God did not let the devotion die. What was hidden and forbidden in Lithuania flourished in Poland.

## The Image from Kraków-Łagiewniki

Ten years after completion of the first painting of the Merciful Jesus in Vilnius and five years after the death of Sister Faustina in Krakow,

another painter presented his own version. This version of the Merciful Jesus gained incredible fame and contributed to the growth of the devotion to Divine Mercy throughout the world.

The painter in question was a man named Adolf Hyła. He came from Kraków. In his youth, he had wanted to join the Jesuit order, but eventually abandoned this intention. Instead, he studied law and philosophy at the Jagiellonian University. He also developed his artistic talent in the studio of a famous painter, Jacek Malczewski. Hyła worked as a drawing teacher and so began an artistic career. The beginning of World War II turned out to be very painful for the painter. In September 1939, his younger brother died in a fight with the Bolsheviks and, in 1940, both his parents died. Shortly afterwards, the German occupiers displaced the Hyła family from their apartment in Krakow. The family were forced to rent a tiny, one-storey house in Kraków Łagiewniki. It was near the Convent of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

Three years later, Adolf Hyła approached the sisters with an unusual request. The artist wished to create

a painting to present to the convent chapel as an offering of gratitude for saving part of his family during the war. The sisters asked him to paint an image of the Merciful Jesus. They gave him a reproduction of the first painting by Eugeniusz Kazimirowski. They included a copy of the description of the painting from the diary of Sister Faustina. Nevertheless, the artist made the commissioned work using his own inspiration. When it was finished, the size of the donated painting did not fit the altar in the sisters' chapel. And so it was presented to the Church of the Sacred Heart in Wrocław.

Mother Irena Krzyżanowska then ordered a second painting to be completed. This was placed in the convent chapel in Krakow. Hyła's second image was consecrated by the Jesuit Father J. Andrasz in 1944. It remains in the church for the faithful to venerate to this day.

In the second painting, Hyła placed the Merciful Jesus before a meadow and shrubs. However, after the intervention of Fr Sopoćko in 1952, the background was repainted with a dark background and a floor under Jesus' feet, more resembling the original image.

In time the image of the Merciful Jesus from Łagiewniki became famous for many graces bestowed through its devotion. It has become one of the most recognizable representations of Christ in the entire Catholic world.

**Urszula Grzegorzcyk**

Consultant: Sr Maria Kalinowska,  
Congregation of the Sisters of Merciful  
Jesus, [www.faustyna.eu](http://www.faustyna.eu)



■ The 2<sup>nd</sup> version of the painting  
with meadow in the background



■ World's most famous Divine Mercy Image  
in Łagiewniki near Kraków, Poland



■ Adolf Hyła, self-portrait



# The Eucharist is my highway to heaven!

**Two years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the Catholic Church beatified one of the youngest souls in her history. It was Carlo Acutis, well-known for his website, which catalogues Eucharistic miracles from all over the world.**

Carlo Acutis was born on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1991 in London to Italian parents, Andrea Acutis and Antonia Salzano. His parents were not particularly religious, but they worked hard in the UK and Germany, finally settling down in Milan, when Carlo was a few months old.

When the boy was older and showed great interest in the world, his Polish babysitter introduced him to a devout life, after trying to answer many of his questions. There must have been something intriguing in those talks, for at the age of seven, Carlo asked to receive First Holy Communion. After that, he made a promise to adore Jesus in the tabernacle either before or after Mass.

He used to say that “the Eucharist is my highway to heaven!” He never missed daily Mass or the Rosary. Being an amateur computer programmer, he designed and



■ Carlo at the steps leading to the Shrine of St Michael

developed a website documenting Eucharistic miracles in various places all over the world, to which he travelled with his parents. His favourite place was Assisi, the birthplace of St Francis, founder of the Franciscan Order. Thanks to his great interest on the subject, his parents came back to the faith.

He was like many other children: he went to school and was interested in comic books, movies and computers. What distinguished him, however, was his desire to live in the presence of God, a grace which he

abundantly shared with his family, friends and peers. Carlo was brave enough to defend disabled children, who were being bullied at school. After school, he helped the homeless as a volunteer.

In early October 2006, he fell ill. Everybody thought it was just the flu, but he was taken to hospital, as his condition worsened. The diagnosis was terrible - advanced leukaemia. Carlo took it calmly, offering all his sufferings for the Catholic Church and the Pope, who was then Pope Benedict XVI.



■ Carlo's mother and Fr Ladislao Suchy in the Shrine of St Michael, Monte Sant'Angelo, Italy

He died just a week after his diagnosis, on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006, and was buried in his beloved Assisi. His mother, Antonia, was devastated, but Carlo promised her before his death to give her a sign that he was in heaven with God.

Four years later, at the age of 44, his mother gave birth to twins. It was exactly on the anniversary of Carlo's death. She took it as his promised sign. Just ten years after that, in February 2020, Pope Francis officially recognized a miracle in Brazil from Carlo Acutis. As a result, he was beatified on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Ten days later, his mother visited the Shrine of St Michael in Monte Sant'Angelo, Gargano, Italy. She wanted to thank St Michael for his presence and the spiritual comfort he had given her, especially after Carlo's death.

Fr Ladislao Suchy, the Rector of the Shrine, said, "She received the grace of consolation and peace, hearing the inner voice that reassured

her, 'your Carlo is in heaven.'" Carlo visited the shrine several times and had a deep devotion to this Prince of Angels. He often recited the angelic chaplet and relied on St Michael for all of his activities.

I gave Carlo's mother a miraculous stone and a consecrated statue of St Michael to be taken to the Centre of Blessed Carlo Acutis in Assisi."

On April 6<sup>th</sup> 2019, Carlos Acutis' body was placed in the Sanctuary of Renunciation at Assisi. Blessed Carlo Acutis' body can now be viewed by pilgrims for veneration and prayer. He has been named as one of the patrons of World Youth Day, which is set to take place in Portugal next year.

**Angela Taylor, UK**

Further info:

[www.santuariosanmichele.it](http://www.santuariosanmichele.it)  
[www.miracolieuucaristici.org](http://www.miracolieuucaristici.org)  
 (Carlo Acutis' own website)

**Q&A with employees from Monte Sant'Angelo in Italy, the grotto famous for many healings and graces.**

**Who first told you about St Michael? What are your first memories related to Him?**

**Raffaele Santorio (sacristan):** I attended the sanctuary with my parents from the age of seven, as an altar boy carrying candles in the procession. I remember May 8<sup>th</sup> on the anniversary of the apparitions – this is a great feast for us – my parents could not find me due to the large number of faithful people, they eventually found me in the grotto.

**Angela Berard (works at the pilgrim's house):** I was a baby, who was born 24 weeks premature and managed to fight all odds and survive, St Michael helped me. My parents were very grateful to God and I was baptised in the cave of the apparition. I recall my parents and aunt often saying that St Michael is powerful and protects us in life and at this heavenly shrine.



■ Raffaele Santorio, sacristan



# Saint Michael is everything to us

**Raffaele D'lasio (organist):** When I was a little boy, we prepared performances about St Michael at school on the feasts of 8<sup>th</sup> May and 29<sup>th</sup> September, celebrations went on everywhere in the local area.

**How has your relationship with St Michael developed and what are you personally grateful to him for?**

**Raffaele Santoro:** First I was a volunteer in the Servizio Di Ordine (The Church Order Service) with the previous custodians the Benedictine fathers and they offered me a role in the sacristy. I am grateful to St Michael for my job which enables me to support my family. I continued my role in the sanctuary with the Michaelite Fathers when they

became the official custodians taking over on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1996. In this work I experience a closeness to St Michael which allows me to deepen my spiritual bond with the Prince of Heavenly Hosts. Witnessing on numerous occasions spiritual, physical and mental miracles near the altar.

**Marisa Lauriola (receptionist):** I am grateful to St Michael for everything. Through His intercession, I have received and continue to receive all the graces I need from God. I feel the presence of St Michael with me and his support. He has and continues to help me with many specific matters. Thanks to St Michael I can work in the sanctuary hotel. I have a fiancé and neither of us cannot imagine getting married anywhere else other than the sanctuary.

**Raffaele D'Lasio:** St Michael is a great mystery to me but he is helping me slowly to get to know him better. I am glad that I have the opportunity to work as the organist in the Sanctuary. I come here with all kinds of difficult matters and after praying always seem calmer, full of trust with inner peace. I feel St Michael guards and protects me, including the times I may find myself in an alarming situation. Due to my frequent presence in the grotto of apparitions I feel an acquaintance with him and sense his loving protection is stronger than say, if I worked somewhere else.

St Michael is my support and role model and helps me not to give into temptation of the evil spirit. With St Michael at your side people gain courage, strength, steadfastness and consistency in action. He allows me



■ Marisa Lauriola, receptionist



■ Angela Impagnatiello,  
works in the Pilgrim's House



■ Raffaele D'lasio, organist

to face the usual difficulties of life and accept them as they are, without panic or unnecessary fear.

**Michelina D'Errico:** Once St Michael appeared to me in a dream. I was in the grotto and three times he called me by name to bring a deaf child to his statue near the altar. Since then I encourage pilgrims to approach St Michael and ask for physical and spiritual graces.

**Caterina Li Bergolios (sanctuary worker):** Being in the grotto in front of St Michael gives me the experience of inner peace. I understand that this is a holy place and I try to immerse myself in prayer there. I come to St Michael when dilemmas arise especially in a crises of faith. He is my patron and protector, he is everything.

**Rosanna Totaro (works in the reception):** In the normal hardships of life, I always address my prayers first and foremost to St Michael the Archangel and I believe that the Lord Jesus is not offended by this. I pray spontaneously, for example: "St Michael help me lift this heavy cross". Whist praying in the grotto, I often experience inner peace.



■ Michelina D'Errico, works in the Shrine



■ Caterina Li Bergolios, Raffaele Santoro and Maria Pia Lombardi at the main hall of the Pilgrim's House

**The Sacristan Raffaele Santoro's wife:** I was about to marry a man from Sardinia, sadly he died in an accident. In the grotto of St Michael I was looking for strength and consolation and there I met Raffaele my future husband who happened to be the sacristan. At first I was not attracted to him in any way and was even resentful that he had the opportunity to be in the grotto so often through his work.

I first approached St Michael as an opportunity arose for me to help out mopping the floor and cleaning the sanctuary. Over time being so close to the statue St Michael came more into my life. Now I visit the sanctuary more often, take part in the liturgy and this is a special grace for me.

**Being here permanently you are a witness of the graces experienced by pilgrims who come here from all over the world. Do you remember any special events?**

**Angela Berard:** I was on duty at the reception desk when the elevator failed, inside was a hysterical little girl who was claustrophobic. Her anxious mother remained downstairs

while I tried to reassure her that we would repair the elevator and her daughter would soon be free.

The mother was sobbing, so I took her to the grotto. There was only one man there – a tall man with blue eyes and blond curly hair. I left the distraught lady inside while I was looking for a way to unlock the elevator. When I returned with the daughter a short while later, the mother said that this man approached her, calmed her down and held her hand.

We all wanted to thank this "man" but to our surprise we found the cave empty, the main door was locked and in the meantime no one entered or left the grotto...

**Marisa Lauriola:** I witnessed a girl who had problems with her legs and could not walk properly. She heard about the sanctuary and came here to pray for healing. Through the grace of God she was healed.

**Raffaele Santoro:** Once a man came here with his grandfather. He was reluctant to enter the grotto, eventually he did and saw an amazing scene. Someone was shouting for joy-because he was healed. He was



lame and started to walk normally. Another man was married in this grotto; and later as a widower he became a priest. Earlier his two sons became priests and three daughters – all became nuns. It is St Michael's miracle of vocations.

**Michelina D'Errico:** A man from Naples, on the verge of bankruptcy, came here to ask St Michael for help. He also asked for a white stone in the reliquary from the Grotto of the apparitions which he had blessed by a priest. After some time he called with thanks and praise about the grace he received, bankruptcy was avoided.

### What does it mean to the local people that St Michael and the grotto is here.

**Raffaele D'Lasio:** This place was inhabited even before the fifth century. St Michael's apparitions made life flourish here. For more than 1500 years, that is, from the first apparition, there has been a close relationship between the inhabitants of Monte Sant'Angelo and St Michael. Whoever thinks of St Michael also thinks of Monte Sant' Angelo and vice versa. He became the centre of our lives. In the first instance people call out to St Michael the Archangel instead of calling out first to the Lord Jesus or the Mother of God. They even "complain" to the Archangel. St Michael is, in a way, the founder of this place. He is close to God, St Michael is His soldier and a powerful knight fighting for the salvation of souls.

**Raffaele Santorio:** The Grotto is our home, our property, which no one can infringe, it is everything to us. We are internally very attached to

this place, we have it deep within our hearts, and it is part of our life.

**Angela Berard:** St Michael is the greatest holiness for us. His spiritual presence is continuous and we feel his protection and care in this heavenly shrine and for us.

**Rosanna Totaro:** St Michael is everything for us, our patron and protector. We come here from our parishes, because most devotions are here, for example adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the chaplet of the Divine Mercy, the Novenas to the Divine Mercy and St Michael, etc.

**Michelina D'Lasio:** We, the inhabitants, are always in danger of taking for granted the holiness here. Pilgrims make huge efforts to visit St Michael, they come from the seven continents in the world. Sometimes they come here barefoot, carrying large stones as a penance.

When I look at them and see how the pilgrims are transformed it really touches people's hearts. They are overjoyed that they can stand in this holy grotto, I envy them this happiness. I am most touched not by celebrities or church or government officials, but by ordinary people. They humbly kneel somewhere in a corner like St Francis saying a long simple prayer of gratitude. Love and devotion to St Michael is best expressed by the song "Siamo Pelegrini", which has and continues to be sung here for many years.

### How would you recommend people to visit St Michael in the Apparition Grotto of Monte Sant' Angelo?

**Angela Berard:** You must first give them information or speak with



■ Shrine of St Michael the Archangel, Gargano, Italy

them about St Michael's holiness, including the history of the apparitions. This would give them the opportunity to come and get to know St Michael better. Faith comes first from listening.

**Raffaele D'Lasio:** I would tell everyone: Come to Monte Sant' Angelo, this place is filled with a special spirit.

**Caterina Li Bergolios:** Believe, come, see, experience and you will believe even more.

Interview with Shrine employees by  
Fr Pawel Hajduga CSMA  
and Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA

# Act of Consecration to St Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael the Archangel, great prince of heaven and most faithful guardian of the universal Church, I greet you and praise you for that splendour with which God has adorned you so richly. Trusting in your goodness, power of your prayers and numerous blessings for men I stand before you in the company of my guardian angel, Blessed Father Bronislaw Markiewicz, all the saints and blessed ones. I ask them to witness my dedication and devotion to you. Saint Michael the Archangel, I consecrate to you my body and soul. I choose you as my particular defender and intercessor.

I solemnly promise to always honour you and to make every effort to spread devotion to you. St Michael the Archangel, be my strength through the whole of my life so that I do not offend God with any thought, word or deed. Protect me against all the temptations of Satan particularly those against faith and purity. Entreat peace for our souls at the hour of death and lead us to the eternal homeland. Amen.

## MYSTERIES OF THE ACT OF CONSECRATION

How numerous, how spiritually abundant is the Act of Consecration? Before attempting to reveal its riches, we must first examine the official text used on pictures of St Michael and in the shrine at Miejsce Piastowe, near Krosno in Poland. In accordance with the above structure, it is divided into three sections as follows:

### OPENING

Saint Michael the Archangel, great prince of heaven and most faithful guardian of the universal Church, I greet you and praise you for that splendour with which God has adorned you so richly. Trusting in your goodness, the power of your prayers and numerous blessings for men I stand before you in the company of my guardian angel, Blessed Father Bronislaw Markiewicz, all the Saints and Blessed ones. I ask them to witness my dedication and devotion to you. Saint Michael the Archangel, I consecrate to you my body and soul. I choose you as my particular defender and intercessor.

### PART ONE

I solemnly promise to always honour you and to make every effort to spread devotion to you.

### PART TWO

St Michael the Archangel, be my strength through the whole of my life so that I do not offend God with any thought, word or deed. Protect me against all the temptations of Satan particularly those against faith and purity. Entreat peace for our souls at the hour of death and lead us to the eternal homeland. Amen.

### INVOCATION

The invocation used in the Act of Consecration is much longer than that of the Lord's Prayer. It consists not of one, but three titles, used in the first sentence:

1. Great prince of heaven.
  2. Most faithful guardian of the universal Church.
  3. Saint Michael the Archangel.
- In the last sentence of the opening, however, two further designations have been added:
4. Particular defender.
  5. Intercessor.

Only the third of these appeals clearly indicates to whom the prayer is addressed. The first two titles,





■ Visitation of St Michael's statue in the Shrine of the Black Madonna, Jasna Góra, Poland, July 2022

although preceding the third, are only used with reference to St Michael the Archangel. In conjunction with the last two designations, they tell us more about St Michael the Archangel.

The petitions in the Litany to St Michael the Archangel tell us more about him as do the twenty four appeals in the Supplications. All of these appeals give us more information as to his identity. While repeating each in turn, we get to know him more and more, turning to his intercession with greater joy, thereby increasing our trust and devotion. Let us therefore reflect on the titles in the Opening or Invocation of the Act of Consecration.

## 1. Great Prince of Heaven

The first title by which we address St Michael is that of PRINCE. This title is generally understood to mean a member of a ruling family and serves to underline their dignity, importance and greatness. It distinguishes the person in a positive way. St Michael is a prince, the first among the angels as well as being their leader. The Prophet Daniel calls him one of the leading princes (Daniel 10:13, 21),

supplications, great and heavenly (the litany includes the invocations, "Prince most renowned" and in the supplications, "Prince most excellent".

The first adjective – 'great' – fulfils an important role in this context. It can be said to be the key word to understanding the full significance of the person of St Michael the Archangel.

'Great', and, therefore, a person of immense importance and significance, outstanding in terms of his intellectual and creative capacities and capabilities; who has distinguished himself in a particular field of endeavour, having high honour in heaven; a person who has done great deeds; exceptional. 'Great' also implies a person of great influence and capacity; a holder of high office, who has achieved great benefits for mankind; an authority; renowned. The adjective 'great' not only describes this amazing spirit, but also induces us to reflect on the key question: In what does St Michael's greatness consist and what is its source? His greatness flows from the greatest of virtues – that of humility: Who is like to God? Its opposite is pride, the source of Satan's: I will not serve! The greatness of St Michael consists in his perfect knowledge of the design of the Creator and

in his obedient fulfilment of His will. Jesus says to His disciples: "If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:34). The greatness of St Michael the Archangel consists in his humble service of God and man.

The second adjective which characterises the Prince of the Heavenly Host is 'of heaven'. In its definition of the terms heaven and earth, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (326) regards earth as the sphere of human beings. Heaven, on the other hand, signifies, firstly, the firmament, and secondly, the dwelling place of God: Our Father, who art in heaven (Matthew 5:16), as well as the dwelling place of the heavenly spirits, the angels, which surround God. St Thomas Aquinas uses the adjective heavenly in describing St Michael the Archangel, counting him among the heavenly creatures, beings who mediate between God and man, whose existence – according to St Thomas – is necessary to the perfection of the universe (Summa 1 50:1). As a Prince of Heaven, he is the commander of the heavenly hosts (the reason he is chosen as patron of the army and police), as opposed to Satan, who is an earthly prince, the ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11).

Pope St John Paul II, on his visit to Gargano in 1987, spoke of the Prince of Heaven as follows: “He is one of the princes of heaven with whom the Saviour will come,” who will one day take upon Himself all sovereignty over the world (cf Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:24; and, Revelation 21:6-8).

## 2. Most faithful guardian of the universal Church

The second title: GUARDIAN OF THE CHURCH (Guardian and Patron of the Church in the Litany, Angelic Guardian of the Church in Supplications) shows St Michael the Archangel as the person to whom God has entrusted guardianship of the Church. A guardian – a person who has something or somebody in his keeping. The term signifies care and concern for something or somebody. Such an attitude engenders trust and a sense of security. He is the most faithful of guardians. He is characterised by his sense of duty and responsibility and his constant, unwavering discreet guardianship. One can calmly count on his care and support, trusting him implicitly.

## 3. Saint Michael the Archangel

The third and most-frequently used title by which he is invoked is by his own proper name, SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL. It refers to the spiritual world, to the heavenly

creatures, beings which live in spiritual closeness to God, who is thrice Holy. The title shows him as one of these spiritual beings, although not anonymous. In saying these words, we know whom we are invoking. We know him by name. Among the peoples of the Ancient World names played a significant role, whereby one became aware of the essential attributes of each person. To be deprived of one's name was to be deprived of any significance whatsoever. In contrast, the possession of many names signified social standing and the roles one had to play.

God Himself wished to reveal his name (Exodus 3:13-16, 6:29) and identifies so much with his own name that when he speaks of it, he speaks of Himself.

The name invoked in the act of consecration is loved, honoured and sanctified. The invocation of this name multiplies God's glory, is an act of praise to God (Michael means ‘Who is like God?’) and calls down upon people that which is good.

## 4. Particular Defender

The next title by which St Michael the Archangel is known is that of DEFENDER. It indicates someone who defends others against potential danger, aggression or evil and prevents them from coming to harm. A defender must use appropriate means to prevent that which they guard from coming to harm and effectively repel physical or verbal attack. The third preface of Easter says of Christ that: “He never ceases to offer himself for us but defends us and ever pleads

our cause before you. He has given up his own life in order to defend ours.” We acknowledge St Michael as an extraordinary defender, given that he defends us against our greatest enemy – the serpent and his angels (Revelation 12:7). Pope Leo XIII, seeing the great threat facing the Church, immediately composed the prayer in which he implored St Michael the Archangel to defend us in battle and against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.

## 5. Intercessor

The final invocation is that of INTERCESSOR: he who intercedes for someone before another, acting on their behalf and for their benefit to obtain for them the support they require. A sign of living faith in the intercession of St Michael the Archangel is the acclamation which is constantly repeated in the Supplications: ‘Intercede with God on our behalf.’

The invocation goes on to use three crucially important terms for those reciting the Act of Consecration in that these encourage an attitude of trust. The first of these concerns his **Goodness**. He is a spirit of good, just like He who created him. Jesus says: “No one is good but God alone.” (Mark 10:18). The goodness of God the Creator is reflected in St Michael the Archangel. It is part of his whole being, his will and reason. It is in all that he does and in his attitude to mankind. St Michael the Archangel is good in all his being and, therefore, he can only emanate goodness and only do that which is good.

The next crucial term is the **Power of his Prayers**. If Jesus asserts that man can obtain all that he asks in



prayer (Matthew 7:11) how much more so can a heavenly being? He – in contrast to a human being – has no limitations. In contemplating God he is constantly at prayer, more so even than the saints (1 Thessalonians 1:2, 5:17). He knows God, much more than we do, which is why he knows that God always hears our prayer, which is why he prays for us.

Finally, his **Blessings to Men** are manifold and numerous. This was the case for the people of the Old Testament, towards Israel, of whom he was the defender (Daniel 10:13, 10:21 and 12:1). It is also true for the people of the New Testament throughout the whole history of Christ's Church. The best example of the manifold blessings is his most famous shrine on Mount Gargano in Italy. On his visit to the shrine in 1987, Pope St John Paul II said, "Since the year 493 when Pope Gelasius I granted permission that the grotto of the apparition of St Michael the Archangel become a shrine and visited it for the first time, granting the 'Angelic Pardon' indulgence, many popes have followed in his footsteps to pay their respects in this holy place. Among them were Agapetus I, Leo IX, Celestine III, Urban IV, Gregory IX, St Celestine and Benedict IX. Many saints obtained graces and strength there, such as St Bernard, St William of Vercelli, St Thomas Aquinas, St Catherine of Sienna, St Francis and many others."

Passage taken from  
*Act of Consecration to St Michael  
the Archangel* book (2016)  
by Fr **Karol Dabrowski** CSMA

# You are good people

## Dear Readers and Benefactors,

I am writing to thank all of you, who contributed to helping the Ukrainian refugees. Through your kindness, we received a number of parcels of desperately needed, brand-new items for orphans aged between two to twelve years of age. They included underwear, socks, sweatshirts, shoes, T-shirts, leggings and pyjamas. We also received new single bedsheets, single duvet and pillowcase sets and blankets.

**The mothers and children were extremely happy and asked me to pass their heart-filled gratitude to all of you good people.**

Many of the donated gifts stayed in Poland. We distributed them among our orphanages and refugees in our convent houses in Kraków, Miejsce Piastowe and Wielopole Skrzyńskie.

The Michaelite Sisters run a nursery in Nowe Jaryczewo, a town in Ukraine, about 30 km from Lviv. The remainder of the brand-new gifts went there. This was helpful as washing facilities can be difficult at times. The sisters also give shelter to refugees from the war-affected eastern areas of Ukraine, where heavy fighting is taking place.

At present, mothers and children are supplied with all the summer clothes they need.

All they wish for and desire is to go back to their homes and to their husbands and fathers.



■ Jackie Cullen and Brendan Pierce (Ireland) with CSSMA Sisters

I would like sincerely to thank all the readers of *The Angels Magazine* for their gestures of kindness and mercy, for all the efforts made to come to the aid of our neighbours in need and for donations made via Fr Peter Prusakiewicz CSMA.

**I am deeply convinced that St Michael the Archangel, the patron saint of Ukraine, urges us all to call out on him, "Who is like God?" especially when we face the enormity of evil and suffering in Ukraine.**

We would like to thank you on behalf of the Ukrainian children and mothers. We assure you of our daily prayers.

Orphanage Co-ordinator Sr **Agata**

Sister Agata Krupa CSSMA  
Mother House of Michaelite Sisters  
ul. Ks. B. Markiewicza 22,  
38-430 Miejsce Piastowe, Poland  
Email: ekonomka@michalitki.pl



■ Knights of St Columba who have escorted the statue since the start of its tour

# St Michael in Scotland

**When St Michael departs there is great sadness but when he arrives there is immense joy.**

Archbishop Nolan from the Archdiocese of Glasgow, Bishop Toal of the Motherwell Diocese, Bishop John Keenan of the Paisley Diocese, Bishop Robson of the

Dunkeld Diocese and the clergy have given St Michael a warm welcome as he visits different parts of the country. John O'Donnell and fellow Knights of St Columba humbly escort



■ Deacon Colum Martin and Rev. Ghislain B. Mulumanzi in St Monica's Church, Coatbridge

the statue each Wednesday as it process into a new church. Parishioners sing uplifting hymns as St Michael enters the church. During the week people have the opportunity to attend vigils, special services and time for personal prayer and petitions.

The tour coordinator Mary Doogan said "The different services have been so uplifting, full of joy and hope. Our musical accompaniment where requested has proven very popular."

Mary along with Maria Glen, Pat Whitehouse and their team have witnessed a renewal to the devotion to St Michael on this grace filled tour which commenced in May 2022.

During the summer the pilgrim statue went to Craig Lodge House of Prayer, the headquarters of Mary's Meals located in the beautiful Scottish Highlands for a week from 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

Many school children have attended parish events. In preparation for the visitation the children have learnt the St Michael Novena and other prayers to the Archangel.



■ Sisters from Congregation of Missionaries of Charity, St Robert Bellermino Church, Glasgow

**Noreen Bavister, Deputy Editor**





■ Archbishop of Glasgow William Nolan



■ Fr Montesi at St Bartholomew Church



■ Personal prayer

# Pilgrim statue of St Michael the Archangel to visit

**24 – 31 August 2022**

**St Aidan's Church**

Tower Road, Johnstone  
Renfrewshire PA5 0AD

Contact: Rev Mons. Tormey  
Phone: +44 (0)15-0532-0900

**31 August – 7 September 2022**

**St Joseph's Church**

2 Eaglesham Road, Clarkson  
East Renfrewshire G76 7BT

Contact: Canon Stephen Baillie  
Phone: +44 (0)14-1644-2640

**14 – 21 September 2022**

**Parish of Our Lady  
and St Andrew's**

Stirling Street, Galashiels, TD1 1BY

Contact: Fr Andrew Kingham  
Phone: +44- (0)18-9675-2328  
Email: parishpriest@galacatholic.org

**21 – 28 September 2022**

**St Mary's Church**

Bowmore Street,  
Kelso TD5 7DZ

Contact: Fr David Edwardson  
Phone: +44 (0)15-7322-4174  
[www.borderscatholic.co.uk](http://www.borderscatholic.co.uk)

**28 September – 5 October 2022**

**St Michael's Church**

7 Cardross Road  
Dumbarton G82 4JE

Contact: Fr Vincent Toal  
Phone: +44 (0)13-8976-2709

**5 – 12 October 2022**

**Our Lady and St Helen's Church**

117 Achray Road,  
Condorrat, Cumbernauld  
Glasgow G67 4JG

Contact: Fr John Mulholland  
Phone: +44 (0)12-3673-1258

**12 – 19 October 2022**

**St Patrick's Church**

1 John's Street, Coatbridge ML5 3HB

Contact: Fr. Kevin McGoldrick  
Phone: +44-(0)12-3660-6808

**19 – 26 October 2022**

**St Bernadette's Church**

2 Logans Road  
Motherwell ML1 3PH

Phone: +44-(0)16-9826-3945  
Contact: Fr Rickman Mallaig

**26 October – 2 November 2022**

**St Thomas of Canterbury  
RC Church**

56 Dishlandtown Street,  
Arbroath, DD11 1QU

Contact: Fr Andrew Marshall  
Phone: +44 (0)12-4187-3013  
Email: stthomas@dunkelddiocese.org.uk

For updated programme details for September and October or to book the pilgrim statue to come to your parish in Scotland contact: Mary Doogan  
Email: [stmichaeltourofscotland@yahoo.com](mailto:stmichaeltourofscotland@yahoo.com)

# Precious days of grace

## Visit of St Michael Statue at St Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley.

**D**ear brothers and sisters, what a joy and comfort it has been for us to host the most impressive image of St Michael the Archangel in our Cathedral parish and diocese this past week.

Please God, this fine statue, which has been commissioned to tour the parishes of Scotland, has brought you and your loved ones, our parish and diocese many graces and favours of protection, guidance and blessing. I know it has been a week of intense and ongoing prayer in the Cathedral parish, involving the Novena to St Michael prayed after all our Masses as well as the Prayer of the Chaplet of Saint Michael on weekdays before midday Mass and, while the statue has been in the parish, I know the Cathedral has been busy with the private prayers of the faithful who have come here from morning till evening. Before this special presence of Saint Michael leaves us, I am very happy to celebrate this Votive Mass of the Holy Angels with you to conclude these precious days of grace.

In the Scriptures this week we are reflecting on the mission of the Prophet Hosea, through whom the



■ L-R Monsignor Joseph Burke, centre Bishop John Keenan and Deacon Patrick Doogan

Lord makes known to the people their sins in following the idols of the world and calls them back to a truly intimate and loving relationship with Him from the heart, such as is enjoyed by young couples in the early years of their courtship and marriage.

Hosea is sent to the People during a dark and sad chapter in their history. Rather than striving for faithfulness to God they have gone their own way. They have followed leaders who pandered to them and let them do their own thing. Soon they replace worship of the One, True God

with their own idols, the product of their own ideas and desires, and worship these. Hosea points out how following false and illusory gods did them no good at all, and how all the hopes that they had manufactured for themselves had gone on to reap only a cruel whirlwind for them. And now there was no wheat for them to eat, the ear of wheat yielded no flour, while foreigners in far off lands had swallowed whatever there was, keeping it for themselves. Hosea is sent to remind the People that the cause of all their misfortunes, even economic,



# St Michael and the angels

St Michael the Archangel  
for God stood firm.

“Who is like God?”

he did assert and affirm.

O prince

of the heavenly host,  
Defender of the Church,  
stand by your post!

That war in heaven

that you fought of old,  
Still, today,

in our souls does unfold.

Help us in our struggle  
against sin,

So that the prize  
of heaven we may win.

On this earth

we are merely passengers.

Holy angels,

be our prayers' messengers.

Now all you who

behold Him face to face,

Help us to victory  
in life's race.

You angels who are

in heaven above,

May we also, like you shine  
in God's love.

**Mr Colin McAllister,**  
**St Andrews, Scotland**

stem from their iniquity and should be understood as a punishment for their abandonment of the Lord.

Many centuries later we find Jesus in the Gospel encountering a man now possessed by a demon that has entered into him and made him dumb. Following on from the prophecy of Hosea we are able to see where rebellion against God begins and ends. It begins in putting other plans and hopes before Him, as false gods but, left unchecked, it ends up enslaving us in the possession of demons who make us incapable of calling out for help. This is the bottom of the slippery slope for humanity when nations set up their own idols in place of God and follow the false ideas of their times and the deceptive desires of their hearts.

This is why we thank God for the salvation of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. For God, Our Father, sent His Son into the world: yes, to proclaim the Good News of the kingdom and cure all kinds of diseases and sickness; but also, to have compassion on a harassed and dejected humanity languishing under the power of the Devil and the hold of the demons that threaten to silence the message of truth and goodness in any age and place.

During His public ministry, rebuking the Devil and casting down demons was a key part of Jesus' ministry of salvation. It is one that He was ready to carry out on His own account but which He willed to share with other labourers.

Today we come to honour and seek the intercession of the Lord's first and most exemplary labourer in this harvest, Saint Michael the Archangel. When the Devil and his angels rebelled in heaven it was

Michael and his angels who, at the Lord's summons, waged war on them, who defeated them and who cast them out of heaven and down to earth. His job was only half done! For we do not want the Devil and his angels on the earth and, even since, the Church has called trustfully upon Michael to defend us in our day of battle, to be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; and, by the power of God, to cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. In the presence of Saint Michael today we make this fervent prayer anew, so that our times can be free of the power of the Devil and rejoice again in crying out the praise and glory of the One, True God.

All of this we commend to Our Blessed Mother, the Queen of the Angels. After the Archangel Gabriel had received Mary's *Fiat* and knew She had accepted Her vocation to be the handmaid of the Lord and Mother of the Messiah, the angel left Her sight but never Her side as Her protector and guide.

We thank God for this week in which we have been blessed by this visible sign and presence of Saint Michael and we pray that he now never leaves us and our loved ones, our parishes and our diocese, but lights and guards our way, rules and guides our lives until we are safe home in heaven surrounded by the glory of the angels and saints and enjoying eternal joy with God.

**Bishop John Keenan**  
Votive Mass of the Angels  
Homily on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022  
St Mirin's Cathedral,  
Paisley, Scotland

# How to practise hope (part 2)

**In the arduous times of pandemic we experience various losses. Some of us lose health or loved ones; some lose work or their life savings. We all have lost the way of life that we used to lead before. Lots of us lose hope. How can we regain it and keep it on a daily basis?**

**H**ere are some tips suggested by Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Spe Salvi*.

## Greater hope

All serious and upright human conduct is hope in action. This is so first of all in the sense that we thereby strive to realize our lesser and greater hopes, to complete this or that task which is important for our onward journey, or we work towards a brighter and more humane world so as to open doors into the future. Yet our daily efforts in pursuing our own lives and in working for the world's future either tire us or turn into fanaticism, unless we are enlightened by the radiance of the great hope that cannot be destroyed even by small-scale failures or by a breakdown in matters of historic importance.

If we cannot hope for more than is effectively attainable at any given time, or more than is promised by political or economic authorities, our lives will soon be without hope.

It is important to know that I can always continue to hope, even

if in my own life, or the historical period in which I am living, there seems to be nothing left to hope for. Only the great certitude of hope that my own life and history in general, despite all failures, are held firm by the indestructible power of Love, and that this gives them their meaning and importance, only this kind of hope can then give the courage to act and to persevere.

## Hope opens us

Certainly we cannot “build” the Kingdom of God by our own efforts - what we build will always be the kingdom of man with all the limitations proper to our human nature. The Kingdom of God is a gift, and precisely because of this, it is great and beautiful, and constitutes the response to our hope. And we cannot - to use the classical expression - “merit” heaven through our works. Heaven is always more than we could merit, just as being loved is never something “merited”, but always a gift. However, even when we are fully aware that heaven far

exceeds what we can merit, it will always be true that our behaviour is not indifferent before God and therefore is not indifferent for the unfolding of history. We can open ourselves and the world and allow God to enter: we can open ourselves to truth, to love, to what is good. This is what the saints did, those who, as “God’s fellow workers”, contributed to the world’s salvation (cf. 1 Cor 3:9; 1 Th 3:2).

We can free our life and the world from the poisons and contaminations that could destroy the present and the future. We can uncover the sources of creation and keep them unsullied, and in this way we can make a right use of creation, which comes to us as a gift, according to its intrinsic requirements and ultimate purpose.

This makes sense even if outwardly we achieve nothing or seem powerless in the face of overwhelming hostile forces. So on the one hand, our actions engender hope for us and for others; but at the same time, it is the great hope based upon God’s promises that gives us courage and directs our action in good times and bad.



## Suffering masters our hope

Like action, suffering is a part of our human existence. Suffering stems partly from our finitude, and partly from the mass of sin which has accumulated over the course of history, and continues to grow unabated today. Certainly we must do whatever we can to reduce suffering: to avoid as far as possible the suffering of the innocent; to soothe pain; to give assistance in overcoming mental suffering. These are obligations both in justice and in love, and they are included among the fundamental requirements of the Christian life and every truly human life.

Great progress has been made in the battle against physical pain; yet the sufferings of the innocent and mental suffering have, if anything, increased in recent decades. Indeed, we must do all we can to overcome suffering, but to banish it from the world altogether is not in our power. This is simply because we are unable to shake off our finitude and because none of us is capable of eliminating the power of evil, of sin which, as we plainly see, is a constant source of suffering. Only God is able to do this: only a God who personally enters history by making himself man and suffering within history.

We know that this God exists, and hence that this power to “take away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29) is present in the world. Through faith in the existence of this power, hope for the world’s healing has emerged in history. It is, however, hope - not yet fulfilment; hope that gives us the courage to place ourselves on the side

of good even in seemingly hopeless situations, aware that, as far as the external course of history is concerned, the power of sin will continue to be a terrible presence.

Let us return to our topic. We can try to limit suffering, to fight against it, but we cannot eliminate it. It is when we attempt to avoid suffering by withdrawing from anything that might involve hurt, when we try to spare ourselves the effort and pain of pursuing truth, love, and goodness, that we drift into a life of emptiness, in which there may be almost no pain, but the dark sensation of meaninglessness and abandonment is all the greater. It is not by side-stepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love.

## Letter from Hell

In this context, I would like to quote a passage from a letter written by the Vietnamese martyr Paul Le-Bao-Tinh († 1857) which illustrates this transformation of suffering through the power of hope springing from faith. “I, Paul, in chains for the name of Christ, wish to relate to you the trials besetting me daily, in order that you may be inflamed with love for God and join with me in his praises, for his mercy is for ever (Ps 136). The prison here is a true image of everlasting hell: to cruel tortures of every kind - shackles, iron chains, manacles - are added hatred, vengeance, calumnies, obscene speech, quarrels, evil acts, swearing, curses, as well as anguish



■ St Paul Le-Bao-Tinh

and grief. But the God who once freed the three children from the fiery furnace is with me always; he has delivered me from these tribulations and made them sweet, for his mercy is for ever. In the midst of these torments, which usually terrify others, I am, by the grace of God, full of joy and gladness, because I am not alone - Christ is with me... How am I to bear with the spectacle, as each day I see emperors, mandarins, and their retinue blaspheming your holy name, O Lord, who are enthroned above the cherubim and seraphim? (cf. Ps 80:1). Behold, the pagans have trodden your cross underfoot! Where is your glory? As I see all this, I would, in the ardent

love I have for you, prefer to be torn limb from limb and to die as a witness to your love. O Lord, show your power, save me, sustain me, that in my infirmity your power may be shown and may be glorified before the nations... Beloved brothers, as you hear all these things may you give endless thanks in joy to God, from whom every good proceeds; bless the Lord with me, for his mercy is for ever... I write these things to you in order that your faith and mine may be united. In the midst of this storm I cast my anchor towards the throne of God, the anchor that is the lively hope in my heart”.

This is a letter from “hell”. It lays bare all the horror of a concentration camp, where to the torments inflicted by tyrants upon their victims is added the outbreak of evil in the victims themselves, such that they in turn become further instruments of their persecutors’ cruelty. This is indeed a letter from hell, but it also reveals the truth of the Psalm text: “If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I sink to the nether world, you are present there... If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall hide me, and night shall be my light’ - for you darkness itself is not dark, and night shines as the day; darkness and light are the same” (Ps 139:8-12; cf. also Ps 23:4).

Christ descended into “hell” and is therefore close to those cast into it, transforming their darkness into light. Suffering and torment is still terrible and well-nigh unbearable. Yet the star of hope has risen - the anchor of the heart reaches the very throne of God. Instead of evil being unleashed within man, the light shines victorious: suffering - without ceasing to be suffering - becomes, despite everything, a hymn of praise.

## Measure of humanity

The true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer. This holds true both for the individual and for society. A society unable to accept its suffering members and incapable of helping to share their suffering and to bear it inwardly through “com-passion” is a cruel and inhuman society.

Yet society cannot accept its suffering members and support them in their trials unless individuals are capable of doing so themselves; moreover, the individual cannot accept another’s suffering unless he personally is able to find meaning in suffering, a path of purification and growth in maturity, a journey of hope.

Indeed, to accept the “other” who suffers, means that I take up his suffering in such a way that it becomes mine also. Because it has now become a shared suffering, though, in which another person is present, this suffering is penetrated by the light of love. The Latin word *con-solatio*, “consolation”, expresses this beautifully. It suggests *being with* the other in his solitude, so that it ceases to be solitude.

Furthermore, the capacity to accept suffering for the sake of goodness, truth and justice is an essential criterion of humanity, because if my own well-being and safety are ultimately more important than truth and justice, then the power of the stronger prevails, then violence and untruth reign supreme.

Truth and justice must stand above my comfort and physical well-being, or else my life itself becomes a lie. In the end, even the “yes” to

love is a source of suffering, because love always requires expropriations of my “I”, in which I allow myself to be pruned and wounded. Love simply cannot exist without this painful renunciation of myself, for otherwise it becomes pure selfishness and thereby ceases to be love.

To suffer with the other and for others; to suffer for the sake of truth and justice; to suffer out of love and in order to become a person who truly loves - these are fundamental elements of humanity, and to abandon them would destroy man himself. Yet once again the question arises: are we capable of this?

Is the other important enough to warrant my becoming, on his account, a person who suffers?

Does truth matter to me enough to make suffering worthwhile?

Is the promise of love so great that it justifies the gift of myself?

In the history of humanity, it was the Christian faith that had the particular merit of bringing forth within man a new and deeper capacity for these kinds of suffering that are decisive for his humanity. The Christian faith has shown us that truth, justice and love are not simply ideals, but enormously weighty realities. It has shown us that God - Truth and Love in person - desired to suffer for us and with us. Bernard of Clairvaux coined the marvellous expression: *Impassibilis est Deus, sed non incompassibilis* - God cannot suffer, but he can *suffer with*.

Man is worth so much to God that he himself became man in order to *suffer with* man in an utterly real way - in flesh and blood - as is revealed to us in the account of Jesus’s Passion. Hence in all human suffering we are joined by one who experiences and





Alex Shute, www.unsplash.com

carries that suffering *with* us; hence *con-solatio* is present in all suffering, the consolation of God's compassionate love - and so the star of hope rises. Certainly, in our many different sufferings and trials we always need the lesser and greater hopes too - a kind visit, the healing of internal and external wounds, a favourable resolution of a crisis, and so on. In our lesser trials these kinds of hope may even be sufficient. But in truly great trials, where I must make a definitive decision to place the truth before my own welfare, career and possessions, I need the certitude of that true, great hope of which we have spoken here. For this too we need witnesses - martyrs - who have given themselves totally, so as to show us the way - day after day. We need them if we are to prefer goodness to comfort, even in the little choices we face each day - knowing that this is how we live life to the full.

Let us say it once again: the capacity to suffer for the sake of the truth is the measure of humanity. Yet this capacity to suffer depends on the type and extent of the hope that we bear within us and build upon. The saints were able to make the great journey of human existence in the way that Christ had done before them, because they were brimming with great hope.

## Small inconveniences count

I would like to add here another brief comment with some relevance for everyday living. There used to be a form of devotion - perhaps less practised today but quite widespread not long ago - that included the idea of "offering up" the minor daily hardships that continually strike at us like irritating

"jabs", thereby giving them a meaning. Of course, there were some exaggerations and perhaps unhealthy applications of this devotion, but we need to ask ourselves whether there may not after all have been something essential and helpful contained within it.

What does it mean to offer something up? Those who did so were convinced that they could insert these little annoyances into Christ's great "com-passion" so that they somehow became part of the treasury of compassion so greatly needed by the human race. In this way, even the small inconveniences of daily life could acquire meaning and contribute to the economy of good and of human love. Maybe we should consider whether it might be judicious to revive this practice ourselves.

**Pope Benedict XVI**  
*Spe Salvi (35-40)*

# The Majestic Splendour of St Michael the Archangel

**T**he topic of angels is quite popular these days. There are lots of talks and writings about angels, and many interesting presentations can be found on the Internet, especially on YouTube. However, there is one unique angel among so many angelic hosts – St Michael the Archangel. There is a growing renewal of devotion to St Michael, but there are few articles or talks about him; hence the idea of producing a publication based on the wonderful articles serialised in *The Angels Magazine*, which developed into this booklet. Here are a few passages.

## God pours His own holiness on St Michael

The Bible mentions angels almost three hundred times. There are holy angels and fallen angels. St Michael the Archangel is one of the holy angels. Why do we call him St Michael and not only Michael? We call him saint because God pours His own holiness on him; He fills St Michael with His Holy Presence and glory. When we call St Michael, he comes and brings the

holiness, the presence and the glory of God to us. St Michael is filled with God's presence to the fullest. That is why sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether it is God or an angel who works. St Michael and other angels always announce God's presence.

## Angels accompany us like a shadow

Why are angels invisible? Because they do not want to draw our attention to themselves. They are like the moon: it shines with the light reflected from the sun. Angels shine with the beauty reflected from God. They announce a loving God. They are His messengers. They act on behalf of Him. That is how we should understand St Michael.

Angels accompany us like a shadow, constantly, step by step. However, at the same time they are distant due to their mysterious nature. You can see a picture of me and you see only a priest. Yet God sees two more beings: St Michael and also my holy guardian angel who is with me and makes sure that this book is of the greatest benefit.

THE MAJESTIC  
SPLENDOUR  
OF ST MICHAEL  
THE ARCHANGEL



## A Knight and our advocate

St Michael is the chief commander of battle for all times. He is frequently represented as a knight in armour, with a sword. He is not an aggressor, but a protector and defender. He is not an accuser, but an advocate.

We read in the Book of Revelation (Rev 12:10) that the Devil is an accuser of people before God and accuses us as if he was placing us in the dock. St Michael, however, is always on our side. He asks God to give us another chance and extend the time of mercy. He never gives up fighting a person's corner. He is our advocate and always a friend to us. He is the enemy of the Devil but is always helpful towards us as human beings. He is on our side. He wishes us to call on him. That is very important.

## Discover St Michael

May his example help us to discover St Michael and to decide to go through life with him. May we overcome each temptation with St Michael and enjoy



the freedom of God's children with his help and intercession. May we engage in saving souls with St Michael because it is our, and his, desire that no one should join the fallen angels but, instead, should participate in heavenly happiness. St Michael and his angels already enjoy this happiness and are waiting for us.

People have often asked me about St Michael, the patron saint of my congregation. Due to the great interest in St Michael, I looked into the scientific and systematic study of many English, Italian and Polish authors throughout the ages internationally. My information also came from Holy Scripture and the traditions and teachings of the Doctors of the Roman Catholic Church whose works are true and timeless.

I express my deep appreciation and gratitude to those who have spoken and written about Saint Michael the Archangel and helped me to discover and understand his greatness and splendour. This has enabled me to write articles and this new booklet about the Prince of the Heavenly Host.

I hope that you discover St Michael the Archangel and hear his strong call from the bottom of his heart: Who is like God? There is no one like our good, loving, omnipotent, just and infinitely merciful God. St Michael, thank you for being among us.

Keep us close to Jesus' loving heart. Lead us on a good spiritual path. We count on you. Amen.

Fr **Peter Prusakiewicz** CSMA

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# SCAPULAR INVESTITURE

## Rite of blessing and investiture of the Scapular of St Michael the Archangel.

Any priest or deacon can conduct the ceremony of blessing and bestowing of the Scapular of St Michael the Archangel according to the following ritual.

**V.** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**R.** Who made heaven and earth.

**V.** The Lord be with you.

**R.** And with your spirit.

Almighty, everlasting God, who dost graciously defend thy Church from the wiles of the devil through St Michael the Archangel, we humbly implore thee to bless + and sanctify + this scapular introduced for arousing and fostering devotion among thy

faithful toward this great protector. And do thou grant that all who wear it may be strengthened by the same Holy Archangel, so as to vanquish the enemies of body and soul, both in this life and at the hour of death. Through Christ our Lord.

**P.** Let us pray.

Lord, look upon us praying and kindly hear the supplication of your servant dedicated to the special protection of St Michael the Archangel that through his intercession s/he may avoid any offence against you and may reach holiness in this life and after death the prize of eternal life. Through Christ our Lord.

**R.** Amen



# Prayer for perfect love

**L**ord Jesus, you came to heal our wounded and troubled hearts. I beg you to heal the torments that cause anxiety in my heart; I beg you, in a particular way, to heal all

who are the cause of sin. I beg you to come into my life and heal me of the psychological harms that struck me in my early years and from the injuries that they caused through my life.

Lord Jesus, you know my burdens. I lay them all on your Good Shepherd's heart. I beseech you – by the merits of the great open wound in your heart – to heal the small wound that are in mine. Heal the pain of my memories, so that nothing that has happened to me, will cause me to remain in pain and anguish, filled with anxiety.

Heal, O Lord, all those wounds, that have been the cause of all the evil that is rooted in my life. I want to forgive all those who have offended me. Look to those inner sores that make me unable to forgive. You who came to forgive the afflicted of heart, please, heal my own heart.

Heal, my Lord Jesus, those intimate wounds that cause me physical illness. I offer you my heart. Accept it, Lord, purify it and give me the sentiments of your divine Heart. Help me to be meek and humble. Heal me, O Lord, from the pain caused by the death of my loved ones, which is oppressing me. Grant me to regain peace and joy in the knowledge that you are the Resurrection and the Life. Make me an authentic witness to your Resurrection, your victory over sin and death, your living presence among us. Amen.

**Fr Gabriele Amorth**

*Fr Amorth († 2016) was the Chief Exorcist of Rome, Italy, and the author of four books about the Blessed Virgin Mary. / From An Exorcist tells his story, Nicoletta V. MacKenzie, Tr. © 1999, Ignatius Press, San Francisco CA. [www.ignatius.com](http://www.ignatius.com). Used with permission.*



■ Christ displaying his wounds by Giovanni Antonio Galli, circa 1630



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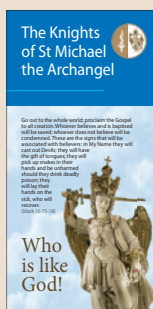
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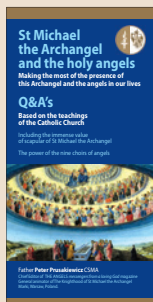
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Contact: Fr Joseph Illo

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**7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**7<sup>th</sup> – The secrets of St Faustina**

**8<sup>th</sup> – The Majestic Splendour**

**of St Michael**

**The Church of St Veronica**

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## UK / IRELAND 2023

**14<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Divine Mercy / St Michael the**

**Archangel Mission**

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