



## From Deacon Mark Miller's Desk

**Last week**, the church celebrated two feasts honoring angels: the guardian angels and the archangels. The Deacon's Desk offered some reflections on the church's understanding of angels in general and background on those two specific feasts.

**The church has** long had a tradition of including angels in her prayers. Alejandro Bermudez, the Executive Director of the Catholic News Agency, assembled five prayers that will increase devotion to guardian angels and the archangels.

**The Prayer to Your Guardian Angel.** When traveling, in danger, or just for an everyday devotion, this prayer is a powerful way to call upon the super-intelligent and angelic beings assigned to each person at baptism to assist them on their journey to heaven. The guardian angels are an expression of God's providence and His love. They can help enlighten one's conscience, guard one from attacks of the devil and physical dangers, and guide them toward holiness. This prayer is a must-have in the arsenal of invocations for Catholics.

**The Prayer to St. Michael.** As Prince of the Heavenly Host, St. Michael is one of the two patron protectors of the Holy Church, a post he shares with St. Joseph. This prayer has special importance for the Catholic Church, therefore. It was ordered to be prayed after the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass worldwide in response to a vision of Pope Leo XIII had of Satan attacking the Church. In recent years,

**The Chaplet of St. Michael.** The chaplet of St. Michael is a prayer inspired by a vision of St. Michael to a Portuguese nun and Servant of God, Antonia d'Astonac, in the middle of the 18th century. The prayer has been indulgenced by the Church and is a devotion that honors the nine choirs of angels, not just St. Michael. According to the EWTN website, "St. Michael promised that whoever would practice this devotion in his honor would have, when approaching Holy Communion, an escort of nine angels chosen from each of the nine Choirs. In addition, for those who would recite the Chaplet daily, he promised his continual assistance and that of all the holy angels during life, and after death deliverance from purgatory for themselves and their relations."

**The Angelus.** The Angelus is the traditional prayer used to sanctify 6:00 a.m., noon, and 6:00 p.m. by calling to mind the moment of the Incarnation when Jesus Christ took human flesh in the womb of His mother Mary. It is built upon the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary, includes three Angelic Salutations (the first

half of the Hail Mary) and concludes with an invocation for the grace to follow Christ to His Passion and Resurrection.

**The Angelic Trisagion.** This prayer was composed after the founding of the Order of Trinitarians in 1198 A.D. and has been recited by them ever since. The prayer borrows from the scriptural understanding of how the angels praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before the throne of God in Heaven. Unlike the rosary, which has five decades, this prayer has three decades: one in honor of each person of the Blessed Trinity. This hymn of worship is a masterclass in how to give honor to God as the angels do.

**You can be excused** for wondering “who are the Trinitarians?” Their full and proper name is The Order of the Most Holy Trinity and of the Captives. St John de Matha's vision was a community that would pay the ransoms of Christians who were held captive by nonbelievers and pirates primarily as a result of the Crusades. Each member of the Order vows to share their lives with each other, consecrate themselves to the Trinity, and take the redeemer as their primary model. Today, “the Trinitarians, together with the Trinitarian Family, choose to heed the yearning for liberation and the cry of hope. We offer a service of mercy and redemption to the oppressed of our society and, in a special way, to the persecuted and those who are discriminated against because of their religious faith, their fidelity to their conscience, or their adherence to the values of the gospel.”

**The Order includes** priests, brothers, and two communities of nuns: Cloistered Trinitarian Nuns as well as congregations of Trinitarian Sisters. Since its founding in 1193, they have been a mendicant order. The first mendicant order was founded by St. Francis of Assisi. According to Wikipedia “The mendicant friars were bound by a vow of poverty and dedicated to an ascetic way of life, renouncing property and travelling the world to preach. Their survival was dependent upon the good will and material support of their listeners. It was this way of life that gave them their name, "mendicant", derived from the Latin 'mendicare', meaning "to beg.”

**Today the order** as about 650 members. They serve the people of the area where they live by performing works of mercy and redemption and are active in the areas of human rights, education, parish ministry, and mission work.