

SEPTEMBER 29 2025 FATHER LARRY MARCILLE

My dear friends in Christ,

What would you give to see beyond the visible, as to see heaven open, to behold the angels, and to stand in the presence of God?

Philip brought his friend Nathanael to see Jesus, and Jesus does the unthinkable. He brought revelation to Nathanael, revelation of how God looks at each of us and the very depths of our hearts, and invites us to imitate—to intimate communion with him in His heavenly court.

Nathaniel, as you can understand, was quite startled that Jesus could know him and understand what was in his heart even before Nathanael had the opportunity to speak with Jesus.

We may ask, "What is the significance of Jesus' revelation that he saw Nathanael under the fig tree?"

Well, for the people of Israel, the fig tree was a symbol of God's peace and blessing. It provided shade from the midday sun and a cool, refreshing place for retreat, to pray, to reflect on God's word. Rabbis often gathered their disciples under the shade of the fig tree to teach them the wisdom of God.

From the scriptures, the rabbis often had an expression for comparing the fig tree to being nourished with God's word in scripture, for it is said, "He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit."

It was very likely that Nathaniel was thinking about God under the fig tree. We do not know for certain. And reflection on God's promise to send a Messiah King who would free his people from sin and oppression and usher in God's kingdom of righteousness and of peace.

Through the gift of revelation, which Jesus offered to Nathaniel, Jesus was truly recognized as the Messiah and Nathaniel proclaimed it. Jesus offered Nathaniel the greatest gift of all, the gift of friendship with God and free access to God's throne in heaven.

And now, I'd like to speak today on the three archangels, the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael. As we all know, the angels are pure spirits and so immortal, created by God before he created man. They are meant to be extensions of God's love and provident care for us.

Their role is to praise and worship God, act as God's messengers, do God's will, and protect human beings. For, from Psalm 91:1, we hear, "He will give his angels charge over you, to guard you in all of your ways."

God sent his angels to destroy the evil cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, and to save Lot's family. God gave Moses an angel to support and guide him. For, in Exodus 32:34, we read, "My angel shall go before you."

It was an angel who helped Jesus in the desert and encouraged Jesus during his agony in Gethsemane. And the Acts of the Apostles 1:14 describes how God sent an angel to liberate Peter from prison.

The archangels form one of the nine orders of angels. The most prominent among them in scripture are Michael—the protector, Gabriel—the messenger of God, and Raphael, the healer and guide for humans.

All of their names end in the suffix, '-el', and this is truly a reference to God called 'Elohim' in the Old Testament.

Michael then means, "Who is like God." Gabriel means, "God is my strength." Raphael means, "God heals."

Michael means, "Who is like God." From the challenge, he flung the rebel angels led by Lucifer. In the Book of Daniel, he is a great prince who defended Israel. And the Book of Revelations, which we heard this morning, he is the mighty prince who fought with Lucifer, and who dragged the serpent into hell.

Since he is the protector of the church, we pray the prayer to him, composed by Pope Leo XIII.

Gabriel, he is God's messenger. It was Gabriel who announced to Elizabeth's husband, the priest Zachariah, the happy news that his barren wife would conceive a son, John the Baptist. He announced the good news to Mary, that she was to bear the Son of God.

He may have been—the unknown angel sent to Joseph in a dream to tell him that he was to take Mary into his home as his wife. "For it is through the Holy Spirit this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son. And you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins."

Gabriel also announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. He may have been the messenger instructing the Magi to return to their lands by another route, rather than returning to King Herod, and also the messenger who appeared to Joseph in a dream to instruct him to return to Israel: "They who sought the life of the child are dead."

Raphael means "God is my strength." He is man's God-appointed guide and healer. He guided Tobias in his journey. Tobias tasked of collecting his father's money from Gabriel of Rages, arranging Tobias' marriage with Sarah, and gave Tobias the name to heal Tobot's blindness, and also protected Sarah from the devil.

These are our three archangels we celebrate today, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.

So, I'd like to ask you to join me today with the sacred and old prayer of St. Michael the Archangel when we pray together:

Defend us in battle, St. Michael the Archangel.

Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray.

And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits that prowl about the world, seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen.