

**Reading for the Feast of the Holy Archangels,
Michael, Gabriel and Raphael
29th September 2026**

First reading

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

‘His clothing was white as snow.’

As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgement, and the books were opened.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 138(137):1-2a. 2b-3. 4-5. R1c

In the presence of the angels I praise you, O Lord.

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart; you have heard the words of my mouth.

In the presence of the angels I praise you. I bow down towards your holy Temple.

I give thanks to your name for your merciful love and your faithfulness.

For you have exalted over all your name and your promise.

On the day I called, you answered me; you increased the strength of my soul.

All earth's kings shall thank you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, 'How great is the glory of the Lord!'

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 103(102):21

Alleluia, alleluia.

Bless the Lord, all his hosts,

his servants, who do his will.

Alleluia.

Gospel

John 1:47-51

‘You will see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’

At that time: Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael said to him, 'How do you know me?' Jesus answered him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered him, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered him, 'Because I said to you, "I saw you under the fig tree", do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

The word “angel” denotes a function rather than a nature. Those holy spirits of heaven have indeed always been *spirits*. They can only be called angels when they deliver some message. Moreover, those who deliver messages of lesser importance are called angels; and those who proclaim messages of supreme importance are called archangels. And so it was that not merely an angel but the archangel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary. It was only fitting that the highest angel should come to announce the greatest of all messages.

Some angels are given proper names to denote the service they are empowered to perform. In that holy city, where perfect knowledge flows from the vision of almighty God, those who have no names may easily be known. But personal names are assigned to some, not because they could not be known without them, but rather to denote their ministry when they came among us. Thus, Michael means “Who is like God”; Gabriel is “The Strength of God”; and Raphael is “God’s Remedy.”

Whenever some act of wondrous power must be performed, Michael is sent, so that his action and his name may make it clear that no one can do what God does by his superior power. So also our ancient foe desired in his pride to be like God, saying: I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven; I will be like the Most High. He will be allowed to remain in power until the end of the world when he will be destroyed in the final punishment. Then, he will fight with the archangel Michael, as we are told by John: A battle was fought with Michael the archangel.

So too Gabriel, who is called God’s strength, was sent to Mary. He came to announce the One who appeared as a humble man to quell the cosmic powers. Thus God’s strength announced the coming of the Lord of the heavenly powers, mighty in battle. Raphael means God’s remedy, for when he touched Tobit’s eyes in order to cure him, he banished the darkness of his blindness. Thus, since he is to heal, he is rightly called God’s remedy.