



Message on the Solemnity of Saint Michael the Archangel
29 September 2025
His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to you on the occasion of the Solemnity of Saint Michael the Archangel which the Church celebrates on September 29th, and who is the patron saint of the Archdiocese of Toronto. St. Michael reminds us that our Christian life is not adrift, happenstance, or a series of accidents, but a vocation. Living the life of a disciple is characterized by a call to stand with God in truth, charity, and justice. During this Jubilee Year — set aside by the Church as a time of renewal, reconciliation, and hope — our celebration takes on an added dimension, resetting our gaze on the ultimate horizon: God’s faithful love and the bright promise of immortality. As “Defender of the Church”, St. Michael reminds us that our hope is not naïve optimism but the theological virtue (CCC, 1817-1821) that steadies us amid conflict and distress (cf. *Dan 12:1*).

As many know, St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica, anchored in the heart of the city, is named after the Archangel. Our feast recalls that the archdiocese’s very identity is stamped by the ministry of St. Michael: to worship God, resist evil, protect the vulnerable, and serve the common good (cf. Pope Francis, *Address*, 5 July 2013). When faced with a worldview that is myopically focused on the passing things of this world, a lost sense of sin, and promotion of harmful individualism, St. Michael’s patronage encourages us to be discerning, forward looking, and all-encompassing by recalling the primacy of God and placing our trust in God alone (cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily, Feast of the Archangels*, 29 Sept 2007).

The name “Michael” comes from the Hebrew and means “Who is like God?” or in Latin, “*Quis ut Deus?*”. It is traditionally associated with the Archangel’s battle-cry and victory over Satan and as such stands as a question that humbles power and purifies misplaced zeal when taken seriously. It can serve to shape civic imaginations, and caution leaders, citizens, and disciples alike that no



ideology can save, and no economic plan can heal the deepest wound of the human heart (cf. St. Gregory the Great, *Homily 34*). Only the living God — adored in the Eucharist, encountered in the poor, and proclaimed with expectant joy — can do that. This is the primacy of God proclaimed by St. Michael that bids us to go to hospitals, shelters, boardrooms, construction sites, indeed all places of work and leisure with a renewed vocation: to share the truth, to act justly, and to keep hope alive.

During this Jubilee Holy Year we are encouraged to engage in pilgrimages, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and works of mercy, charity and justice. The feast of St. Michael is a natural waypoint for all three. Pilgrimage is not merely a physical trip, but a journey of the heart that involves conversion and confidence in God (*Spes non Confundit*, 5). The very name “Michael” calls for this conversion, purification and confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is not mere moral bookkeeping or airing of dirty laundry, but a restoration of baptismal grace and recommitment of self. Again, it is the same clarity of vision and recommitment, the very light of Christ given at baptism that St. Michael bears against the “father of lies”. Finally, one of the four principal roles of St. Michael is to protect and defend God’s people. Our spiritual and temporal works of mercy — feeding, visiting, welcoming — are how we “push back” the darkness in the city we love. (cf. *Spes non Confundit*, 7-15).

My dear brothers and sisters, the upcoming Feast of St. Michael anchors our spiritual warfare of everyday living and fidelity. Nevertheless, our beloved patron is not a mascot for aggression but a model of adoration and service. In this Jubilee, may St. Michael teach us to choose praise over complaint, intercession over cynicism, and solidarity over isolation. Included with this letter is the Novena to St. Michael the Archangel. I would like to renew my invitation once again this year to join me in praying the Novena to St. Michael for authentic renewal of our Catholic institutions, parishes, schools and universities, healthcare and social agencies. The Novena to St. Michael begins on 20 September and ends on 28 September . Under his patronage, may the Archdiocese of Toronto grow as a city on a hill - where the beauty of the Gospel is proclaimed, the sacraments are celebrated, the poor are cherished, and hope rings out above the noise. Saint Michael the Archangel, pray for us.