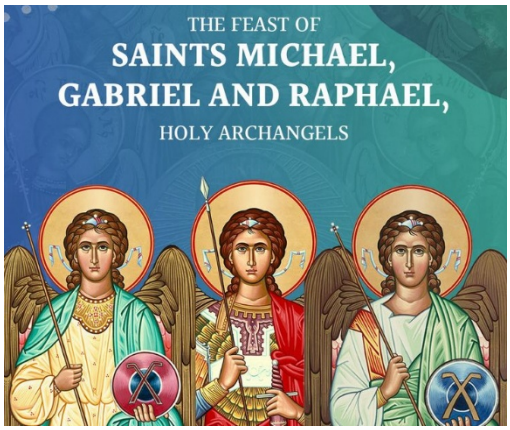
Liturgical Living: Celebrating Michaelmas



On September 29, the church celebrates Michaelmas (pronounced Mickel-mis), which is the feast of the Archangels. This day originally was the feast of Saint Michael, but it now honors St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael.

Along with Gabriel and Raphael, Michael is one of only three Angels mentioned by name in the canonical Scriptures, and the only one explicitly called an Archangel (see Jude 1: 9). In Greek, *archangelos* can mean "chief Angel" as well as "Archangel," the second lowest of the nine angelic choirs. Opinions have therefore varied as to Michael's exact rank and essence. The Church Fathers saw him as head of all heavenly spirits.

From the Middle Ages until the eighteenth century, Michaelmas was a holy day of obligation and a much-anticipated feast. Parades, fairs, and plays in honor of Saint Michael were common. Its proximity to the fall equinox made it a magnet for autumnal and harvest observances.

Besides "Michaelmas," the feast of Saint Michael had a few other nicknames. One was "Goose Day" because of a custom of feasting on geese and holding "goose fairs" in which farmers brought their geese to market. A Michaelmas goose was an appropriate way to celebrate the end of the harvest in Ireland and England, especially when the bird in question was a "stubble-goose," an adult goose that had grown plump on the stubble of autumn wheat fields.

Michaelmas was also known as "Devil's Spit Day." An old tradition holds that when Lucifer was cast out of Heaven, he fell into a prickly blackberry bush and angrily spat on it, causing them to turn sour. Because of this tradition, it became common to pick blackberries before September 29 and eat them on this day.

Here are some ideas for celebrating Michaelmas:

- This website is full of great information and ideas for recipes, crafts, coloring pages,etc..
- Catholic Icing also has a lot of great ideas for celebrating.
- Bake St. Michael's Bannock bread. Here is the recipe.
- Eat angel hair pasta for dinner. This is a quick, easy recipe.
- For dessert, try an easy Blackberry Cobbler.

St Michael, pray for us! St Gabriel, pray for us! St Raphael, pray for us!