

Dear Friends

Michaelmas 2017

At the end of September comes the feast of St Michael and All Angels. You've probably heard of "Michaelmas" and may have wondered what it was? It's one of the ancient "Quarter Days" of the year when, anciently, rent had to be paid (etc.) (the others are "Lady Day" (the Annunciation, 25 March), Midsummer Day (24 June), and of course Christmas Day.) It comes as a reminder that the Church's year and the calendar, in our culture, are intimately connected. Lady Day and Christmas Day are all about God's involvement in the world, God's love for us expressed through the Son of Mary. Michaelmas invites us to pay attention to the heavenly realities beyond the everyday.

It would appear that God has designed the universe so that many things are hidden from human view. This applies in an obvious way to the things that science investigates and theorizes about, such as cellular biology and atomic physics. It also applies to the things we call "spiritual" – the reality of God, God's relationship with creation, how God's creatures serve one another and their creator. All this is expressed in the Michaelmas prayer:

Eternal Lord God

**You have ordained and constituted the services of angels,
humans, and all creatures in a wonderful order
Mercifully grant that, as your holy angels never fail
to worship and to serve you in heaven
So, by your appointment, they may ever help
and defend us here on earth
Through Jesus Christ, the Lord of angel hosts Amen**

It is clear that we are not meant to spend a lot of time considering what angels must be like. But it is equally clear that we depend on their ministry to us, just as, for example, we depend on the farmers who grow the food we eat. We do not know much about where it all comes from. We are inclined to forget and take for granted what they do for us.

Praying the Michaelmas prayer is a salutary way of remembering our place in the universe. This Michaelmas, let us bless God ...

- For our guardian angels who care for us personally
- For the angels who keep us company in worship and prayer
- For the angel of our Parish guiding and upholding us
- For the angels who care for the atmosphere and oceans of our planet, to whom the activities of our race must be such a headache
- Any others you can think of we will never know them all!

Your servant in Christ
Adam