

Today we celebrate those mysterious beings which Scripture calls "angels," a name which comes from the Greek word for "messengers." Messengers from God can be visible or invisible, and may take human or non-human forms. Christians have always felt themselves to be attended by healthful spirits — swift, powerful, and enlightening. These spirits are often depicted in Christian art in human form, with wings to show that time and space do not constrain them, with swords to signify their power, and with dazzling raiment to represent their ability to enlighten faithful humans. Of the many angels mentioned in the Bible, only four are called by name: Michael, Gabriel, U'riel, and Ra'pha-el. In the Book of Revelation, the Archangel Michael is presented as the powerful agent of God who wards off evil from God's people and delivers peace to them at the end of this life's mortal struggle.

Many good and faithful Christians find it difficult to accept the existence of angels; for them, angels have no more reality in fact than unicorns, griffins, or the phoenix. It may be true that the existence of angels is not one of the things in which Christians must believe if they want to be saved. Yet whenever Christians say the Nicene Creed, they confess that God has created "all that is, seen and unseen." Entertaining the possibility of angels may be one way of acknowledging the sheer diversity of life, visible and invisible, that God has ordained in creation.

See Readings, page 671.

Sentence

Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, you ministers of his who do his will. *Psalms 103.21*

Collect

Eternal God,
you have ordained and constituted in a wonderful order the ministries of angels and mortals.
Grant that as your holy angels stand before you in heaven, so at your command they may help and defend us here on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Genesis 28.10-17 Psalm 103.19-22
Refrain Bless the Lord, O my soul. *Or v. 1 or CR 1*
Revelation 12.7-12 John 1.47-51

Prayer over the Gifts

God of glory,
as you have appointed angels to minister in your presence, so may all our worship bring you worthy praise.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Trinity Sunday

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
you have fed us with the bread of angels.
May we who come under their protection, like them give you continual service and praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.