

Nine Choirs of Angels



1. Seraphim: highest in the order of angels. They are the guardians or attendants before the throne of God. One of them touched Isaiah lips with a live coal from the altar thus cleansing him from sin. Seraphim have six wings, two cover their faces, two cover their feet and two are for flying. (Isaiah 6:1-7) St. Michael (the Archangel) is actually a princely seraphim.

- 2. Cherubim:** They are human in appearance with double-wings and are guardians of God's glory. They have intimate knowledge of God and continually praise Him. (Ezekiel 10)
- 3. Thrones:** They are the angels of pure humility, peace and submission. They reside in the cosmos where material form begins to take shape. The lower choirs of Angels need the Thrones to access God. (Ezekiel 10:17, Daniel 7:9)
- 4. Dominions:** These are the angels of leaders. They control the duties of the lower angels making known the commands of God. (Ezekiel 1:21)
- 5. Virtues:** known as the Spirits of Motion, they control the elements. They govern all of nature controlling the seasons, stars, moon with even the sun as subject to their commands. They are also in charge of miracles and provide courage, grace and valor. (Ephesians 1:21)
- 6. Powers:** These are the Warrior angels who defend the cosmos and us humans from evil. They fight against evil spirits who attempt to wreak chaos through human beings. (Ephesians 3:10, 6:12)
- 7. Principalities:** In the New Testament Principalities along with Powers refers to one type of spiritual being which are now quite hostile towards God and human beings (Romans 8:38, Ephesians 1:21). Given their hostility towards God and humans due to sin, Christ's ultimate rule over them expresses the reign of God over all in the cosmos. (Ephesians 3:10)
- 8. Archangels:** They are the angels most frequently mentioned throughout the bible. Archangels have the unique role as God's messengers to humanity. In the Church calendar September 29th is the feast of Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, especially observed by the Byzantine rite. September 29th is also known as Michaelmass and focuses not only on these three archangels but celebrates the guardianship of all angels. (Jude 9, 1 Thessalonians 4:16)
 - a. St. Michael** – is the patron and protector of the Church since the time of the Apostles. The Eastern Rite and many others place him over all the angels as the Prince of the Seraphim. He was the leader of the forces of heaven as they triumphed over Satan and his followers.
 - b. St. Gabriel** – We read about him in scripture, first in the Old Testament in the prophecies of Daniel (Daniel 9:21-27). It was Gabriel who appeared to Zechariah in the Holy of Holies announcing the

birth of John (Luke 1:11), and of course it was Gabriel who appeared to Mary proclaiming the annunciation that Mary was to be the mother of our Lord (Luke 1:26).

- c. **St. Raphael** – He first appears in the book of Tobit (3:17; 5:5-28) to heal. He is considered the patron of travelers, marriage and family among others.
- 9. **Angels:** Lowest on the hierarchy, angels are the closest to the material world and to human beings. They are the most caring and social and are here to assist those who ask for help. (Luke 22:43, Matthew 18:10)

