


# Introduction

## ❧ The Spiritual Warrior ❧

 Michael the Archangel is the prototype for the virtues of the spiritual warrior, a paradigm we find at the heart of every spiritual tradition.

The spiritual warrior is committed to non-violence in all his relationships. The conflict he engages in is the battle within. This is the struggle to discern his true calling from the endless stream of life's distractions. It requires great courage and forbearance to step onto the inner battlefield and strike down whatever internal demons stand between our real self and our false self.

The spiritual warrior is the most peaceful person in the community. Because he has dedicated himself to truth at all costs, he is incapable of engaging in any behavior that creates misunderstanding or strife. He is the champion of those who suffer and the protector of those who long to be free. In ancient England, he is represented by Saint George, the legendary dragon slayer.

The only legitimate war, says the Qur'an, is the war between the forces of good and evil inside ourselves. This is called the "inner jihad." *Jihad* means "to strive." We never stop striving to overcome our own negativity and to live righteously. This view challenges the bias we so often encounter when the media attempts to define Islam.

The spiritual warrior wields the sword of discrimination. With this weapon always at his side, he is ready to cut through illusion and liberate that which is real. He is never unkind, but he is not always gentle. He is perpetually honing his blade, and his powers of detection are sharp. When he perceives falsehood, he names it, and then he destroys it. He is not afraid. He has nothing to lose.

When we call upon the spirit of Michael, we are invoking the courage and strength to see the truth and live it, to hear the truth and share it, to know the truth and let it change us.

We fearlessly fling open the doors of our own conscience and examine what we find there. Where we see petty jealousy, we smite it. Where

we see irritability toward the people with whom we share our lives, we banish it. Where we see selfishness, indolence, and cynicism, we cut them out of our hearts.

And yet we must always practice compassion toward our adversary: we must forgive ourselves.

Where we see kindness, let us tenderly cultivate it. Where we see playfulness and joy, let us protect it. Where we see self-appreciation, let us embrace it. Wherever there is love, let us hold a feast in its honor.



In Hebrew, the name “Michael” means “who is like God?” This evokes Exodus 15:11: “Who is like to you among the gods, O Lord? Who is like to you, magnificent in holiness?”

Michael embodies the spirit of inquiry. With his sword of discrimination, Michael continuously cuts through the layers of illusion to uncover the truth. He never ceases to question reality.

Is there any other god but God? Do our efforts to define the Divine, to enumerate its attributes and explain its functions, violate its essential

unity and sovereignty? Does naming the Holy One diminish the Holy One?

Have we engaged in activities we have elevated to such exalted status that they have replaced God in our lives? Are we worshipping money and the objects money can buy? Have we made substances our gods, and addiction our primary form of devotion? Maybe we feel trapped in an abusive relationship whereby our life-force is diminished every day. We can ask to borrow Michael's sword and cut through the tentacles we have wrapped around our lives.

Have we resigned ourselves to allowing injustice to unfold in a situation over which we feel we have no control? If we ask Michael, he will show us that we not only have the power but the obligation to stand up for the rights of the oppressed.

Have we been reluctant to excavate our souls and psyches for fear of the darkness we might find there? If we call on him, Michael will infuse us with courage and strength to enter the interior wilderness and banish the demons that keep us on the periphery of an authentic existence.

Michael invites us to cultivate our curiosity and challenge ourselves to place the Divine at the center of everything we do and everything we are.



Michael is also the angel to whom the Holy One assigned the task of delivering the souls of the deceased to the heavenly realms. The Archangel fulfills his role with unutterable tenderness and respect. This has earned Michael the love of people of faith from diverse spiritual traditions throughout time.

Because of his devotion to returning the souls of humanity back to their divine source, the Catholic Church honors the Archangel with the title of Saint. Michael is not canonized because he never died. Yet, like a human saint, the Archangel Michael stands for the people. We feel close to him. We look to him to intercede on our behalf.



## Defend Us



Michael is the angel of protection. He is invoked in times of danger. Whenever we feel the spirit of evil playing around the edges of our world, we may call on the Archangel Michael to surround us with a shield of divine light to keep us safe from harm.

Michael is the Angel of the Lord in the Hebrew Bible, who guided the Israelites through the wilderness. In the Roman Catholic liturgy, Saint Michael is the patron saint of the military and the police force. According to Muslims, the archangels are so holy their form is impossible to behold.

Michael's mission is more global than personal. Throughout the ages, the Archangel has appeared in support of those human beings who are taking on some vast task on behalf of humanity, such as Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and Joan of Arc.



According to the legends of the Abrahamic tradition, before the Holy One created earth and all its creatures, he created the angels in heaven, with the sole task of adoring him. This was not arrogance; it was love. The angelic choirs could do nothing but echo God's love back to him. The dazzling radiance of the angelic forms could only mirror the radiant love of the Divine.

And so all the angels bowed down to the Holy One in ecstatic reverence. All except for one angel, who refused to worship him: the one they called Lucifer, bearer of divine light, originally the most luminous angel of all. And Lucifer corrupted lesser spirits, seducing them away from the Divine with false promises.

The Holy One appointed the Archangel Michael, the embodiment of strength and the spirit of protection, to cast Lucifer out of heaven. As Michael engaged Lucifer in battle, the rebel angel took the form of a fire-breathing dragon, and the archangel took the form of a knight in shining armor. Michael fought single-handedly, while Lucifer was flanked by an entourage of evil spirits.

They fought a tremendous battle at the gates of heaven. Michael, the more virtuous opponent, prevailed. He crushed Lucifer beneath his feet and hurled him down to hell. And he chained the evil spirits in midair.

From their vantage point between heaven and earth, the fallen angels could see the glory of paradise spread above them and the wonderment of creation unfold below. To witness these blessings and be unable to participate was a grave punishment.

It is said that the spirit of evil feeds on frustration. It yearns to fully engage with life, to create beauty, to have fun, to taste everything. But it cannot allow itself to do so.

One day, some accounts promise, the Holy One will remember his prisoners and set them free. They will be reformed and they will radiate divine love everywhere—in heaven and on earth and through all the forgotten chambers of the hell realms.





## *Ruby*

Ruby Martinez is the single mother of a sixteen-year-old son named Joaquin. Her husband, Juan de la Cruz, died when Joaquin was nine.

Every year for the past three centuries, Ruby's small community in northern New Mexico holds a weekend celebration in honor of the feast days of Santiago and Santa Ana in July. During "fiestas," the generations mingle and attend Mass together, and people of all ages enjoy the parade, the food, the traditional costumes, and the music that fill the historic town plaza.

Last summer, Joaquin decided to go to a late movie with his friends after fiestas. Ruby agreed. When the movie was over, Joaquin called to tell his mom that he and his friends were on their way home.

"I don't have a good feeling about you being out so late during fiestas," Ruby said. "There are crazy drivers out there tonight."

"We'll take the back roads," Joaquin assured his mom.

When she hung up the phone, Ruby did something she had never done before. She dropped to her knees and called on Saint Michael, uttering the prayer of protection Juan had taught her, pleading with the Archangel to keep their son safe.

“You don’t invoke San Miguel lightly,” Ruby says. “Your need has to be really strong to ask for his help. Michael is about protection against evil. I don’t know exactly what made me think my son was in need of the intercession of San Miguel that night, but the feeling was so strong I couldn’t ignore it.”

As Ruby prayed, a sense of profound peace and well-being washed over her. She sat in quiet meditation late into the night, until the phone rang. It was Joaquin’s friend.

“There’s been an accident but everyone’s okay,” he said in a rush before Ruby would have time to panic. “Someone’s coming to pick us up, and they’ll drop Joaquin off at home.”

Joaquin walked through the door a little while later, expecting his mother to be hysterical. Instead, Ruby was completely calm. She took him into the bathroom and examined the

small cuts on his face, then washed them and applied ointment.

Joaquin told his mother that the car had rolled several times and both back tires had blown out. "All I remember is closing my eyes and falling through space," Joaquin said. "We should all be dead."

But Joaquin's minor abrasions represented the full extent of the injuries involved. The car was totaled.

"You had some powerful angels on your side tonight, son," Ruby said.

Earlier that same summer, Joaquin had traveled to Miami to visit his sister, who was living there. He had returned with a tattoo of the archangel Michael battling *el Diablo* on his arm. He braced himself for his mother's displeasure, but, to his amazement, Ruby was not upset. Instead, she chose that moment to disclose an important aspect of Joaquin's spiritual legacy: "San Miguel was your father's patron saint," she informed her son. It was as if Joaquin had a premonition of the danger he would soon face.

The night of the accident, Ruby felt the spirit of her husband and the protective power of the Archangel Michael enfolding Joaquin in their collective embrace, keeping him safe from harm. Incomparably grateful, she gave thanks.



### *Jenna*

Jenna Paulden is a teacher at a Waldorf School, part of an international alternative educational system, founded by the Austrian philosopher, Rudolf Steiner. Saint Michael was a primary inspiration and guide for Steiner, who felt that Michael holds the key to planetary transformation and balance. Along with the rest of the angelic kingdom, Michael infuses the heart of the Waldorf curriculum.

When Jenna first began teaching, she was already deeply acquainted with the unseen realms. She had always invoked *devas* and other nature spirits to nurture her lush mountain garden. It was natural for her to turn to Michael for guidance in the classroom. Her primary

issue had to do with holding her authority with unruly children.

“My question was, how do I maintain a space of unconditional love and deal with children who may be asking for boundaries in some very rude ways?” Jenna says. “I knew I needed to give them clear limits without getting angry or coming from a place of frustration and control.”

Jenna says Michael reminded her that the warrior stance is not one of attack-defense and that the sword he carries is the sword of unconditional love. It’s a position held with such depth and breadth that there is no room for anything but love.

“Michael also helped me cut away all the garbage I had attached to my authority, the stuff that came up when I felt my power was being threatened. He enabled me to visualize the sword. It’s not a ‘kill the bad guys’ kind of sword. It’s the sword of truth. And the truth is love.”

But the sword of truth is not enough.  
“Michael has a consort and her name is Faith,” Jenna adds. “How are you going to use that sword unless you have faith that it’s real and that you’re capable of using it?”

With Michael at her side, Jenna feels empowered to walk into the classroom and face her own preconceptions about leadership as she strives to set healthy boundaries and meet her students' behaviors with love.

"Michael is helping me create a crucible of creative learning and a whole new consciousness," Jenna says. "The transformation happens through my guise of being a teacher, and the children's guise of having their little issues, but it's much bigger than that."



### *Scott*

Scott Murray and his first wife were divorced when their son Winston was two. When Winston was three, Scott married Linda, a nondenominational minister who shared Scott's eclectic beliefs and interest in spiritual healing. Soon after, Scott's ex-wife relocated with their son from New Mexico to her hometown in Oregon. She placed severe restrictions on Scott's visitation with Winston.

When Winston was four, he confided in his father and stepmother about some strange and scary experiences he had been having at his preschool in Portland. As Scott and Linda gently probed the child, they began to suspect that Winston was being exposed to ritual abuse.

Scott reported his suspicions to social services. Troubled by the agency's complete lack of response, Scott then contacted local law enforcement. When the police went to the school to investigate the allegations, they were told by the administration that it was, in fact, Scott and Linda who were engaged in bizarre spiritual practices and had been brainwashing the child. Winston was ordered to undergo psychological treatment.

Frustrated but unwilling to back down, Scott and Linda traveled to Portland and launched an independent investigation. As the couple gathered photographs, children's drawings, and testimonials from current and past students, it became apparent to them that the school was operated by a cult, as part of a network of preschools designed to indoctrinate children through acts of physical and psychological oppression.

As the evidence unfolded, Scott and Linda began to notice that they were being followed wherever they went. Pseudo-repairmen would come to their hotel room at odd hours to install unexplained devices. When they ordered a pizza, a deliveryman arrived immediately. Suspicious, Scott and Linda threw the food away, only to have the real order show up minutes later.

They endured loud whispers all night in the hallway while figures dressed in black continuously filed in and out of adjoining rooms. They found what appeared to be explosives in their rental car. Scott and Linda were afraid to eat, afraid to sleep, afraid to leave their hotel room.

One morning, as the couple prepared to meet with Winston's therapist and confront her, Linda told Scott that she didn't think she could face this next encounter. They had recently discovered that the therapist was a member of the same organization that ran the school.

Linda had wholeheartedly dedicated herself to working on Winston's behalf. She had engaged a wide circle of friends all over the world, whom she referred to as "light workers," to pray for



the child throughout the investigation. She had been by Scott's side during every step of the long ordeal. Lack of sleep and inadequate nutrition had finally exhausted her.

Scott reassured Linda that he would be fine on his own, and he left the hotel alone. He saw men and women dressed in the same black outfits milling about both sides of the street. Taking a deep breath, he began to walk toward the therapist's office.

Suddenly, Scott felt a powerful, protective presence beside him. He glimpsed a towering figure carrying an enormous sword. He knew instantly that it was the Archangel Michael. In that moment, all of Scott's fear melted away and he was completely calm and confident. As he strode down the street, Scott reports, the stalkers scattered like cockroaches under a bright light. He was never afraid again.

After Scott's visitation from Michael, he was awarded joint custody of Winston, the preschool was shut down, and his ex-wife received an official warning to keep their son safe. Scott realized that the work he and Linda had done

to uncover what turned out to be an extensive ring of ritual child abuse was not only a matter of protecting their own family. The Archangel Michael came to their aid because they had engaged in a fundamental battle between the forces of darkness and light.

### 🌀 Apparitions and Shrines 🌀

**M**ichael made several dramatic appearances in ancient history. In the third century, Emperor Constantine claimed that Michael appeared to him in the sky above Constantinople, brandishing a sword and a cross, on the eve of his battle against a rival emperor for control of the Roman Empire. Constantine's subsequent victory on the battlefield represented Christ's victory over Constantine's soul: in that moment, the emperor became a Christian convert.

Michael is known not only as the angel of protection, but also as the angel of healing. In the seventh century, when Rome was being decimated by the plague, Pope Gregory prayed

to Saint Michael to lift the curse from the people. Gregory led the Roman people in a holy procession through the streets for three days. When they reached the tomb of Emperor Hadrian, Michael appeared over Hadrian's grave, his sword dripping with blood, and the sickness soon passed from the city. Gregory built a church at the site of Hadrian's mausoleum and named it *Castel Sant'Angelo*, or "Castle of the Holy Angel."

Phrygia, in Asia Minor, has a long history of venerating angels. It is said that in the first century, Michael caused a healing spring to flow from the barren rocks at Colossae in Phrygia. Pilgrims suffering from disease and disabilities made their way to churches dedicated to the Archangel Michael throughout the region, seeking, and finding, miraculous cures.

At the end of the sixth century, Michael appeared to a wealthy man named Gargano in southern Italy. One day, a lone bull strayed from Gargano's large herd. Gargano sent a servant to look for the errant creature. The man found the bull at the entrance to a cave.

Infuriated by having had to waste so much time and energy looking for an animal, Gargano ordered his servant to kill the bull. But when the man aimed and shot his arrow, it reversed its trajectory in midair and struck him through the heart, killing him instantly.

Gargano was deeply distressed. He sought the advice of the local bishop, who entered a state of prayer and fasting. After three days, Michael appeared to the bishop in a vision. The Archangel descended to earth on the spot where the bull had been found. He told the bishop that the servant had been sacrificed as a sign of the holiness of this place, and a shrine to Saint Michael must be built there.

When Gargano and the bishop went to the cave the following day, they found three lavish altars inside. A stream of pure water flowed from a rock and was soon found to have healing properties. Monte Gargano continues to be a popular pilgrimage site to this day.

In the eighth century, Bishop Aubert of Avranches had a vision of Saint Michael that also involved a bull. Just off the coast of Normandy is

a huge rock that turns into an island at high tide. One night, the Archangel appeared to Aubert and told him to go to the highest point of the rock, where he would find an area trampled by the hoofprints of an invisible bull, as well as a spring of healing waters. He was to build a shrine to Saint Michael on that spot.

Aubert dismissed the vision as a dream. But it came again. And again. On the third visitation, Michael touched the bishop's forehead with his angelic thumb, searing a print that remained for the rest of Aubert's life. The next day, Aubert visited the island and arranged to have a church erected there immediately. Visitors still flock to the sanctuary of Mont San Michel during high tide every day.

In the Middle Ages, a thirteen-year-old girl from France, named Joan, began hearing the voice of an angel, who finally appeared in full form, surrounded by a host of other angels. It was Saint Michael. He was young, strong, and radiantly handsome. He told Joan that God had chosen her to liberate the French people from domination by England. He instructed her in every detail of the battle she was to lead.

Before Joan was burned at the stake as a heretic, she testified that Saint Michael the Archangel had guided her every step. The judges did not believe her. St. Joan of Arc was martyred in 1431 at the age of nineteen.

In more recent history, the elderly Pope Leo XIII collapsed during a meeting with his cardinals. The physicians who rushed to revive him could not detect a pulse and assumed that he had died. But after a few minutes, the pope opened his eyes and described a terrifying vision he had just experienced.

Pope Leo saw a host of evil spirits working diligently to undermine everything that is holy in this world. Just when the visionary was about to despair, the Archangel Michael appeared and vanquished the Prince of Darkness and his helpers, hurling them back to the underworld. After his recovery, the pope wrote a prayer to Saint Michael, which was recited at the end of mass in Catholic churches all over the world from the early nineteenth century until the 1960s.

While Michael has historically limited his exalted appearance to celebrated servants of

humanity during times of global crisis, people of all statures and spiritual orientations have reported a very personal sense of connection with the Archangel in the face of great danger. Michael medicine is powerful, and not to be taken casually. But when the need is strong, turning to Michael could be the perfect remedy.

