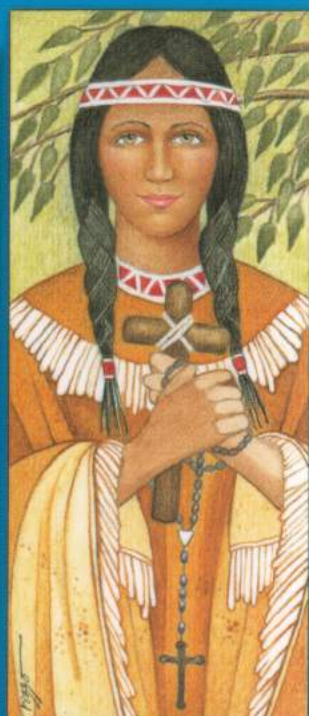
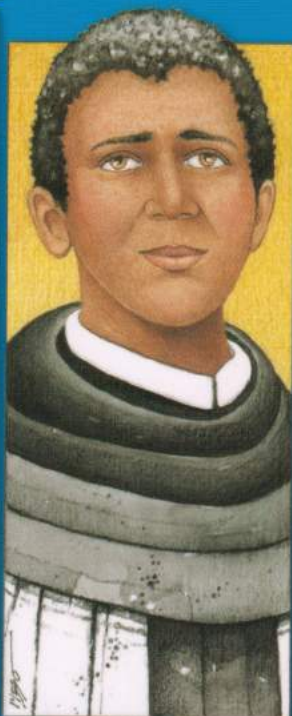


REVISED, WITH NEW STORIES!

# 57 Stories of SAINTS



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Illustrated by Jerry Rizzo





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## THE ARCHANGELS

### *St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael*

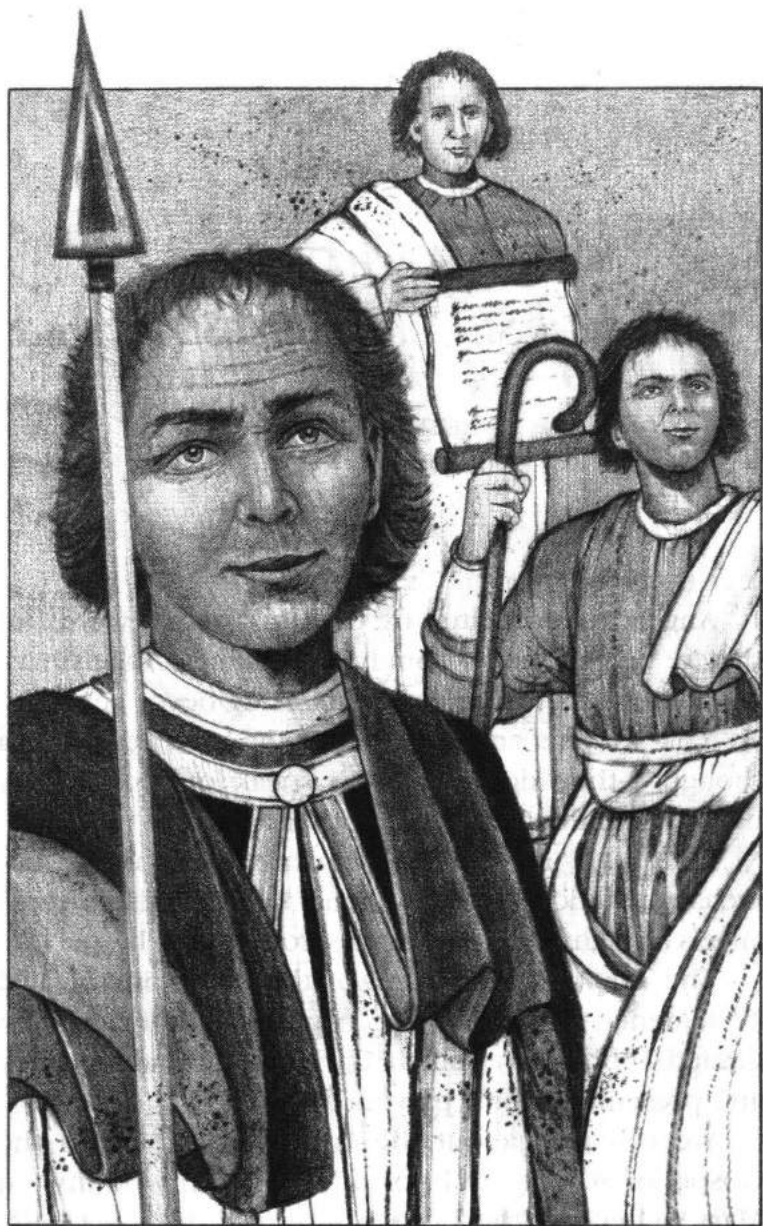
SEPTEMBER 29

Angels were created by God, just as we were, but they're very different from human beings! Angels have no bodies; they are pure spirits. They never get tired. To talk to one another, they only have to think a thought—they don't have to speak out loud. They never misunderstand one another.

The Bible mentions three angels by name: the archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. These three angels brought special messages from God to his people.

The Book of Tobit (one of the books in the Old Testament) tells about the Archangel Raphael, who guided Tobit's son Tobiah during a difficult journey and presented Tobit's prayers to God.

We can read about the Archangel Gabriel in the Gospel of St. Luke. Gabriel was the angel who invited Mary to become the Mother of Jesus, God's own Son.



*The Bible mentions three angels by name: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Angels are messengers of God, and they also present our prayers to God.*



Michael is mentioned several times in the Bible. In a great battle against Satan, Michael led the angels who wished to remain faithful to God. Satan and some other angels had revolted against God. They did not love God and refused to do what God asked them to do. Satan and the other rebellious angels lost the battle. They went to hell. Today we call them devils or fallen angels. After that great battle, Michael became a defender and protector of God's people on earth.

Boys named Michael and Gabriel can think of these archangels as their special patrons (helpers) in heaven. So can boys named Ralph or girls named Gabrielle, Gabriella, or Michelle.

Jesus told us about another group of angels called the guardian angels. Each one of us has an angel to watch and guard us from dangers, especially from evil. We can pray to our guardian angels. They can help us keep calm during times of stress or danger. They can help us think clearly and make good choices when life seems confusing. They can comfort us when we go through difficult times. We celebrate the feast of the guardian angels on October 2.

*One way we can be like the angels is to listen carefully to God and try to understand what he wants us to do. We can listen to God by reading the Bible, paying attention to the priest's homily at Mass, and taking time every day to pray. We can pray to the angels when we are afraid of danger or are tempted to do what is not right.*



## *St. Joachim and St. Ann*

(First Century)

JULY 26

Ann and her husband Joachim were prayerful people who tried to obey all the laws of their Jewish religion. At that time, the Jewish people were praying that God would send a leader called the Messiah to save them. They were not a free nation; the rulers of Rome had conquered them and made them pay high taxes. Every young Jewish woman hoped that she might be the Mother of the Messiah. But Joachim and Ann lived together for many years without having any children.

Every day Ann took good care of their home while Joachim brought their flock of sheep out to the pastures. Ann would say many prayers as she carried water from the deep well, or spun the wool from the sheep into fine thread. She prayed that God would bless her and Joachim with a child. At the time when Joachim and Ann lived, people thought that a couple without children must have done something wrong.

An ancient story tells us that one day when Joachim went to the Temple, the priests wouldn't allow him to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. They were afraid that God was not pleased with him. Feeling sad and confused, Joachim left the Temple and went out into the hill country to pray. Suddenly, an angel appeared to him telling him not to be distressed. Soon he and Ann would have a baby!

Joachim had been gone a long time, and Ann started to worry. Just as she was about to go out and look for him, an angel appeared to her also! "Don't be sad any longer," the angel advised. "God has heard your prayers. Soon you'll have a child."

Ann whispered a prayer of thanks and rushed out of the house to find Joachim. She met him by the Temple gate. "Joachim!" she cried, struggling to catch her breath. "Something wonderful has happened! I've seen an angel!"

But Joachim was shouting louder than she was. "Ann, Ann! We're going to have a baby! An angel told me so, too. Surely we are the most blessed couple on earth!"

"We are blessed," Ann agreed, wiping tears of joy from her eyes. "And I think our child must be very special to have an angel come and tell us the good news. We'll consecrate our baby to God."



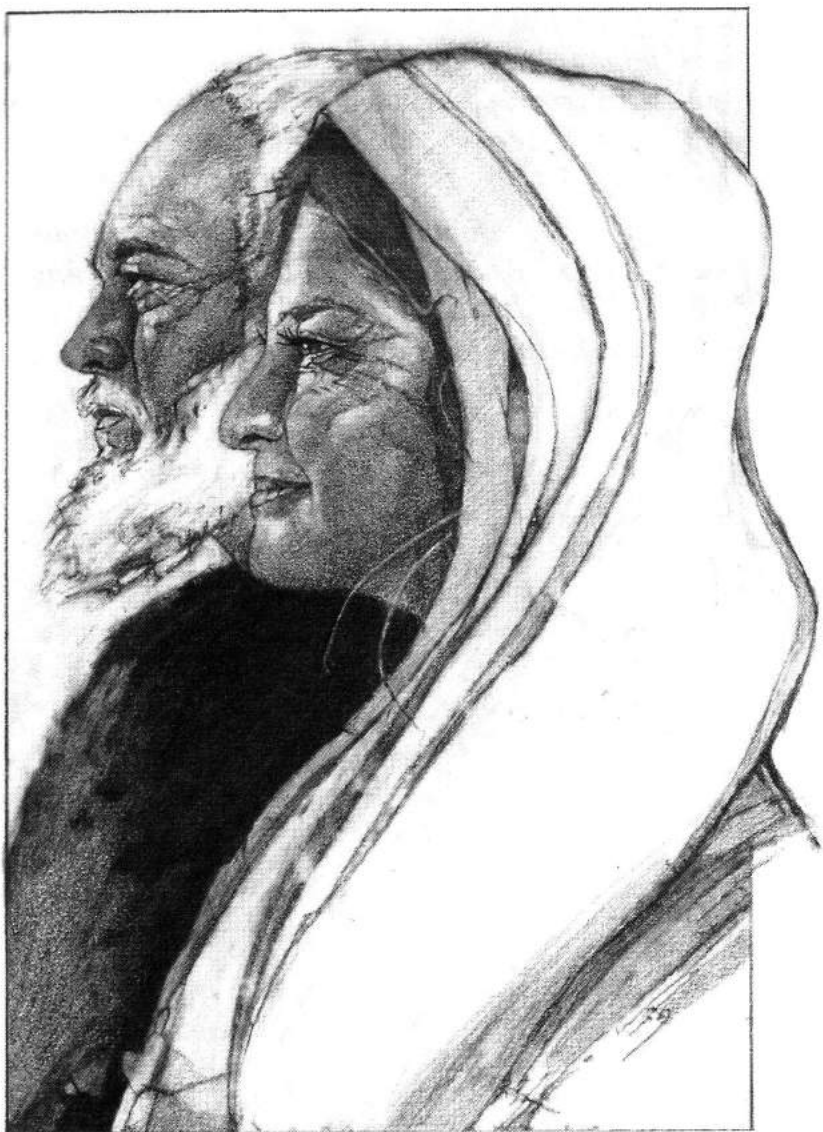
Ann eagerly prepared the house and made warm blankets and clothes for the baby. At last the day

arrived. How happy the couple was when a little girl was born to them. They decided to call their daughter Mary (Miriam in the Hebrew language). Little did they realize that this beautiful little baby would grow up to become the Mother of the Messiah! Nor did they know that their grandson, Jesus, would be the Savior of the whole world!

Mary grew quickly. She slept, toddled, and soon began to walk and run and dance. Ann carefully taught her daughter the prayers of the Jewish people and told her the stories of how God had protected his people for many long years. But what Mary most loved to hear about was how God had promised to send a Messiah to save his people. She prayed often that the Messiah would come soon.

Seeing how much their daughter loved God and prayer, Joachim and Ann decided to bring her to the Temple school in Jerusalem. They would miss having Mary running about and singing in their home. But they knew that Mary would be happy in the Temple. There she would live with other young Jewish girls and learn more about God and the promised Messiah.

Tradition tells us that Joachim and Ann were already elderly when Mary went off to the Temple. We don't know when they died, but it was probably before Mary became the Mother of Jesus. Certainly, while they were loving and caring for Mary, they didn't know that they would someday be the grandparents of the Savior of the world. But that didn't matter. Ann and Joachim focused all their energy on carrying



*Joachim and Ann were happy to do their daily work, loving God and loving their family and friends.*

out their daily duties well, loving God, their family, and their friends. They knew that if they did this, God would be pleased, and his will would be done through them.

*We can imitate Joachim and Ann by doing our daily duties as well as we can and worshiping God in a special way on his day, Sunday. We can pray that all people will come to know Jesus, the Savior of the world.*