

Guadalupe's *St. Michael the Archangel*

Standing sentinel on Tepeyac Hill overlooking Mexico City are four monumental sculptures of the Archangels: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael. The fourth is Uriel, a name that means "Light of God" and the only one of the four who does not appear in Scripture. Tepeyac is the hill on which the Virgin Mary, known as Our Lady of Guadalupe, appeared to an Aztec Indian named Juan Diego in 1531.



Prince of Angels

Tradition has it that the angel at the bottom of the sacred cloth (called the *tilma*) left by Our Lady after the apparition is St. Michael the Archangel himself. Michael appears three times in Scripture (Daniel 10; Revelation 12; and Jude 9) and is preeminent among the angelic host because of his role in cleansing heaven of Satan and the rebellious angels. In Hebrew, his name means "Who-Is-Like-God?" which is an echo of his astonished reaction to Satan claiming to be equal to God (Isaiah 14:14). He is the strongest and most glorious of all angels.

What to Look For

This statute of St. Michael shows him dressed in the traditional garb of the Roman Legion. He is magnificent and fierce, the very picture of strength. There is grim determination in his features fitting the task in which he is engaged. His sword is not earthly. It issues in fire as it pierces the open mouth of the dragon. He is an angel to reckon with. Michael vindicates the rights of God and protects the Church on earth.

Why This is Good Angel Art

This mighty sculpture communicates the spiritual fire that is always associated with angels whose mission is for enlightening the good and purging the

bad. The four archangels together form a sort of Praetorian Guard of the holy place that was touched by the Queen of Angels, but the leader of them all is the Prince of the Heavenly Host, St. Michael the Archangel – God's defender.