

Liturgy We Live *by Dr. Gil Haas*

At this time of year, the church's songs and readings are filled with angelic references. Angels were honored on Michaelmas (which Episcopalians call the "Feast of St. Michael and All Angels") last Friday. Since Michaelmas falls near the equinox, it is associated in the northern hemisphere with harvest's end. Michaelmas term in British schools is fall's first school term. A traditional Michaelmas meal included a "stubble-goose" (cooked when crops were only stubble) and a spongy bannock cake. Folklore prohibited picking blackberries after Michaelmas since on this day Satan allegedly was banished from Heaven, fell into a blackberry bush, and cursed the brambles. Beer brewed on this day is thought to be inferior. St. Thomas Aquinas ranked the angelic hierarchy into nine orders: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels, and angels. There are four archangels mentioned in the Bible: Michael (angel who defeated Satan), Gabriel (Daniel's protector in the lion's den and announcer of the conceptions of John the Baptist to Zechariah and Jesus to Mary), Raphael (healer), and Uriel (revealer of Ezra's prophecies). God is understood to appoint personal guardian angels when the soul enters the body (RC feast day on October 2).

If you have a liturgical question or an inquiry about anything that transpires during or around our worship service, please forward the question you would like researched to: gghaas@aol.com, or drop the question in the offering basin. Please note whether we can credit you as the source of the question.