

# The Patrons of the Legion

## 5. St. Gabriel Archangel

(From the Legion of Mary *Handbook*, pages 139-141)

In some of the liturgies St. Gabriel and St. Michael are jointly hailed as: champions and princes, leaders of the heavenly army; captains of the angels'; servants of the divine glory; guardians and guides of human creatures.

St. Gabriel is the Angel of the Annunciation. It was through him that the compliments of the Holy Trinity were addressed in Mary; that the mystery of the Trinity was first stated to man; that the Incarnation was announced; that the Immaculate Conception was declared; that the first notes of the Rosary were struck.

Reference has been made above to the concern of St. Michael for the Jews. Perhaps the same can be said of St. Gabriel and the Muslims. These believe that it was he who communicated their religion to them. That claim, though unfounded, represents an attention to him which he will seek to repay in a fitting way, that is by enlightening them in respect of the Christian revelation of which he was the custodian. But he cannot by himself effect that transformation. Always human co-operation must play its part.

Jesus and Mary have a strangely dominant place in the Koran, being shown there almost as in the Gospel but without any function. That holy Pair will be kept thus waiting in Islam until someone goes to help them to explain and assert themselves. It has been proved that the Legion has a gift in that way and that its members are received with appreciation by the Muslims. What rich substance for explanation lies in all that Koran material!

The united feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael is celebrated on 29 September.

"The scriptures show us one of the highest of heaven's nobility sent in visible form to announce to Mary the mystery of the Incarnation. Mary was asked to become the Mother of God by an angel because by her divine motherhood she would hold sovereignty, power and dominion over all angels. 'It can be said,' writes Pope Pius XII, 'that the Archangel Gabriel was the first heavenly messenger of the royal office of Mary.' (Ad Coeli Reginam). Gabriel is honoured as patron of those who undertake important missions, who bear important news for God. He bore God's message to Mary. In that moment she took the place of all mankind and he was representative of all the angels. Their dialogue, which will inspire men to the end of time, made a treaty on which will arise 'new heavens and a new earth'. How wonderful, then, was he who spoke to Mary; how wrong it is to reduce his role to one of mere passive recitation. He had been fully enlightened and gave evidence of the widest possible resource. Reverent to Mary, he met fully every enquiry she made, for he was God's spokesman and trustee. From the

meeting between Gabriel and Our Lady came the renewal of creation. The new Eve reversed the ruin wrought by the first Eve. The new Adam, as the Head of the Mystical Body which includes the angels, restored not only mankind but also the honour of the angels tarnished by the false angel." (Dr. Michael O' Carroll, C.S.Sp.)