The Autumn Feast Days

The wonderful exhibition, this summer (at our sister church of S. Bart’s) of art works portraying angels in all their metaphorical and mythological variety, reminds us that the Autumn months see several feast days which colour the tone of this period of ‘ordinary time’ from now until ‘Halloween’ at the beginning of November.

The First is **Michaelmas Day**, (Sept. 29th.) the feast of the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. God is totally free, pure transcendent Spirit: angels are purely spiritual beings without physical bodily aspect. Any representation of them – e.g.at St. Bart’s - must be metaphorical, yet they mirror God’s glory, and do His will. In the great chain of being, animals and other forms of life are purely physical entities. We, human beings, are carnate, neither solely intellectual nor computers made of flesh: and our being has been graced and shared by God in His Son Jesus Christ. St. Michael in particular oversees the
purification of the individual human soul, after death on its journey into God.

Then, at the beginning of October comes the **feast of the Holy Guardian angels**. For each of us, our good angel watches over us during our lives, and over our cleansing and preparation to go before God, after death (cf. Elgar/Newman The Dream of Gerontius.) These guardians share, with the archangels and other heavenly orders, in the angelic nature, and as such they remain in the presence of God while simultaneously carrying out their ministry on earth.

This leads on logically and thematically at the beginning of November to the great **feast of All Saints,** Our fellow human beings who have been perfected by grace and who now are assuredly part of, while viewing, the glory of God in Christ in heaven.  That’s why they are known collectively as the Church Triumphant.

The next day (Nov. 2nd.) is **All Souls Day**, when we recall and honour our loved ones who are hidden from us – by death – with ‘Christ in God.’ Our prayer surrounds them in their state of cleansing, and we are closest to them (in communion with) as we celebrate the Eucharist. These Holy Souls are known as the Church Expectant.