



September 29, Saint Michael the Archangel: Paratroopers Celebrate Their Patron Saint

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On **29 September**, Italian Paratroopers celebrate **Saint Michael the Archangel**, Patron Saint of the Branch. The observance is deeply rooted in the tradition of the maroon berets and ideally unites Paratroopers serving today with those who wore the beret in previous generations.

The **Esercito Italiano** officially recognizes Saint Michael the Archangel as the Patron Saint of Paratroopers and 29 September as the day of his celebration. The observance is distinct from the **Festa della Specialità**, which is instead celebrated on 23 October, the anniversary of the 1942 Battle of El Alamein.

Saint Michael and the Paratroopers

In Christian tradition, Saint Michael is the warrior Archangel, commander of the heavenly host and protagonist, in the Book of Revelation, of the battle against the dragon.

His iconography generally depicts him armed with a sword or spear, in the act of defeating evil. An image that, because of its martial character and symbolic link to the sky, has found a particular affinity with the world of airborne troops.

The **Ordinariato Militare per l'Italia** includes 29 September in its liturgical calendar as the feast of **Saint Michael the Archangel, Patron Saint of the Paratroopers Branch**.

Over the years, the observance has been celebrated in the units of Brigata Paracadutisti "Folgore", at the Centro Addestramento Paracadutismo and in the other units of the Branch, keeping alive a bond that has accompanied the history of Italian Paratroopers since the postwar period.

Not Only the Patron Saint of Paratroopers

Saint Michael the Archangel is not, however, linked exclusively to the paratrooper community.

He is also the **Patron Saint and protector of the Polizia di Stato**, proclaimed as such by **Pope Pius XII on 29 September 1949**. The choice reflects the Archangel's role as defender of good and the mission of personnel called upon to safeguard order, security and citizens.

Saint Michael is also the **Patron Saint of the Ordinariato Militare per l'Italia**, the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that provides spiritual assistance to members of the Italian Armed Forces.

Devotion to the Archangel therefore extends beyond the boundaries of a single Branch and encompasses different military and public-security organizations, symbolically united by the values of **protection, service and defense**.

«Send the Archangel Saint Michael as our guardian»

For Italian Paratroopers, however, the bond has an even more direct meaning.

Saint Michael is invoked in the **Preghiera del Paracadutista d'Italia**, in one of the passages best known to those who have worn the maroon beret:

«Send the Archangel Saint Michael as our guardian: guide and protect the daring flight».

A connection that links the figure of the Archangel to the most distinctive moment of the Speciality: the jump, when the Paratrooper leaves the aircraft and entrusts his return to the ground to the parachute.

September 29 is therefore far more than a simple date on the military calendar. It is an observance that spans different generations and brings together serving personnel, veterans, and members of the **Associazione Nazionale Paracadutisti d'Italia**, keeping alive one of the most recognizable elements of the Italian paratrooper tradition.

Happy Saint Michael's Day to all Paratroopers.

Folgore!