

Archangel Michael is the commander of the heavenly host, one of the seven chief angels, whose ancient Hebrew name translates as “Who is like God?” This rhetorical question has become a symbol of his victory over the rebellious angels and established his primacy among the celestial forces. In the Eastern Christian tradition, Michael is a defender of the true faith, a protector of people, and the executor of God’s judgment.

The cult of Archangel Michael in Ukraine, which dates back to the time of the Christianization of Rus, acquired special significance during the era of the Kyiv State (the 9th to the 13th centuries). At the beginning of the 12th century, Prince Sviatopolk II of Kyiv erected St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Monastery, which attested to the reverence for the heavenly patron of warriors. For centuries, the Archangel has been addressed with prayers for the protection of the state and the preservation of the Homeland – a tradition that is maintained even today.

The veneration of the Archangel also found reflection in Ukrainian sacred art. The Zhovkva iconostasis (1697–1699), created by the Galician master Ivan Rutkovich for the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Zhovkva, is the zenith of Ukrainian Baroque art development. The seven-tiered ensemble, standing over 10 meters tall, is impressive in both its scale and artistic perfection. It combines the Ukrainian-Byzantine icon-painting tradition with elements of Western European art, particularly engraving. Among the iconographic innovations are the series of Sundays of the Pentecost, scenes from



Commemorative coin

Archangel Michael

the Old and New Testaments, as well as the theme of the Passion of the Lord in the Crucifixion composition. Particular attention is deserved by the inclusion of the image of Prince Volodymyr the Great next to the equal-to-the-apostles Emperor Constantine in the Apostolic tier, which was an innovative interpretation of his equal-to-the-apostles status. This depiction is considered to be perhaps the first known representation of Volodymyr the Great in Galician icon painting.

Among the numerous images in the iconostasis, the icon of Archangel Michael on the deacon’s doors attracts special attention. The Archangel is depicted in full size, in a dynamic pose resting on his right leg. His figure stands out against a background of golden floral ornament – a characteristic feature of the Zhovkva school of decorative carving. The color scheme is captivating: The Archangel’s dark green armor with the Maltese cross contrasts with his bright red cloak. In his hands, Michael holds a sword and scales – symbols of the fight against evil and the weighing of human deeds.

Currently, the Zhovkva iconostasis is preserved at the Andrii Sheptytskyi National Museum in Lviv. The image of Archangel Michael remains a symbol of invincibility, the struggle of good against evil, and heavenly intercession for the Ukrainian people in difficult times.

Designer – Tetiana Baluta.
Engravers – Volodymyr Demianenko,
Volodymyr Atamanchuk.

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

NATIONAL BANK OF UKRAINE

Ukraine's small
state coat-of-arms

stylized arch (decorated
with local gilding)

figure of Archangel
Michael from the
icon of the Zhovkva
Iconostasis (decorat-
ed with color
printing)

legend "Who is
like God"

legend
"Ukraine"

face value and
graphic symbol of the hryvnia

Royal Doors of the
Zhovkva Iconostasis
with a prayer to the
Archangel

Baroque-style
floral ornament

clouds

issue year

Issue date	Metal	Diameter	Quality	Edge	Mintage
5 November 2025	silver	38.6 mm	special uncirculated	smooth with incised inscriptions	up to 10,000

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