



Spiritual Meaning of the Icon Our Mother of Perpetual Help

We, who have been raised and educated in the Western World, are accustomed to an imitation of nature in our Art. This is not so in the Eastern or Byzantine World, especially in their religious art. They visualize all creation as a manifestation of God and because of that idea their art bypasses the simply natural and portrays the supernatural presence.

Once we appreciate these facts, a new world of spirituality bursts upon us. The beauty and mystery of an Icon, of the Byzantine world is only captured in the gentle contemplation of its spiritual message. A message that immerses itself into the soul of the beholder and transforms that soul into the realm of the supernatural. The ancient and worldwide-venerated Icon of Perpetual Help is such an Icon.

The artist, who creates an Icon is a holy and theological man. His purpose is not only to please the human emotions of a person but most importantly to illuminate the soul with Divine truth and direct it on to its final destiny. The Icon of Perpetual Help representing Christ and His Mother, contains the three theological essentials found in all true Icons. Through the Incarnation, man becomes a Son of God by sanctifying grace. The spiritual world becomes a reality. Through - With - In - Christ a new creation takes place.

Profound truths only affect us after prayerful meditation over a long period of time. Contemplate the Icon of Perpetual Help. Slowly its spiritual secrets will unfold before your soul and its great truths will rule your life forever.

Christ the Focal point of All. Mary, a human like ourselves, cooperating with her faith, hope, and charity in His great act of Redemption, is the Mother of God- Mother of the Church- Our Mother of Perpetual Help.

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OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

===== The Picture's Meaning =====

Look at the picture. Frightened by the vision of two angels showing Him the instruments of the Passion, the Christ Child has to run to His Mother, almost losing, in His haste one of the tiny sandals. Mary holds Him in Her arms reassuringly, lovingly. But notice Her eyes. They look not at Jesus, but at us. Is this not a touch of genius? How better express Our Lady's plea to us to avoid sin and love Her Son?

Christ's little Hands, too, are pressed into Mary's as a reminder to us that, just as on earth He placed Himself entirely in Her hands for protection, so now in Heaven He has given into Her hands all graces, to distribute to those who ask Her.

Greek Initials for "Mother of God"

Star on Our Lady's veil. She is the Star of the Sea who brought the light of Christ to the darkened world... the star that leads us to the safe port of of "Perpetual Help"

Greek Initial "St Michael The Archangel." He is depicted holding the lance and gall-sop of Christ Passion.

Mary's Mouth is small for silent recollection. She speaks little.

Red Tunic, the color worn by virgins at the time of Christ.

Dark Blue Mantle, the Color worn by mothers in Palestine. Mary is both Virgin & Mother.

Christ's Hands, turned down into his Mother that the Graces of Redemption are in her keeping.



Entire Background is a golden symbol of Heaven, where Jesus and Mary are now enthroned. The gold also shines through their clothing, showing heavenly joy. They can bring to tired human hearts.

Golden crown placed on picture by order of the Holy See in 1867. It is a token of the miracles wrought by Our Lady invoked under the title Heaven.

Greek Initial St Gabriel the Archangel He holds the cross and nails.

Mary's Eyes are large for all our troubles. They are turned toward us always.

Greek Initials for Jesus Christ

Mary's Left Hand Supporting Christ possessively: She is His Mother. It is a comforting hand for everyone who calls on her.

Fallen Sandal Perhaps, indicates the symbol of a soul clinging to Christ by one last thread.