

(Food for thought)

150 Years with the Redemptorist – Icon of the Mother of Perpetual Help (1866 – 2016)



WHAT IS THE MEANING AND MESSAGE OF THE ICON?

As we look at the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, it is important to remember that it is an ICON, painted on wood by an anonymous artist, in the style of the Virgin of the Passion that represents the Christian mystery of Redemption.

What is an icon?

Icon comes from the Greek word meaning 'image'. Christians first used the word icon to describe Jesus who as the image of the invisible God. Then they used the word for all Christians who through baptism were formed in the image of Christ as icons of God and temples of the Holy Spirit.

AN ICON

When we speak of an icon as a piece of art we mean, a representation of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, or a Saint that has been painted according to specific technical and theological norms.

THERE ARE THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT ICONS:

1) Icons are more than a simple representation of events or persons of the past. An icon makes present that which it remembers. It is a meeting point between the mystery of God and the reality of human beings. An icon is not a decoration for the altar; it is in fact the actual altar. Therefore in the Eastern Church, icons are venerated along with the Bible.

2) Icons are the result of prayer. the artist that paints an icon composes the painting in an atmosphere of penance and prayer. They spent hours praying and meditating on the mystery of God and presented in images and colours their spiritual insights. They shared their faith, their prayer with others through art.

3) An icon is an object of meditation. when we come before an icon, we come with an attitude of prayer, we deepen our understanding of the mysterious reality that it represents and we better appreciate the value of prayer. Icons were created to foster prayer and contemplation.

Therefore, when we come to the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, we come with this awareness, that the icon leads us to the mystery of redemption, of salvation, of God saving us. That is the mystery being represented in our icon. God saves us, redeem us.

