

# MEANING OF THE ICON OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

Look at the copy of the picture. Frightened by the vision of two angels showing Him the instruments of the Passion, the Christ Child has 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. This is the principal message of the picture. A Byzantine icon, however, it is replete with other symbols. Here are some of them.

**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 Heaven.

**Greek Initial:**

For St. Michael the Archangel " He is depicted holding the lance and gall-sop of Christ's 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 and Mother.

**Greek Initials for "Mother of God"**



**Golden Crown:**

Placed on the original picture by order of the Holy See in 1867 It is a token of the many miracles wrought by Our Lady invoked under the title of "Perpetual Help."

**Greek Initial:**

For "St. Gabriel the Archangel." He holds the Cross and the 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.

The entire background is golden symbolic of Heaven where Jesus and Mary are now enthroned. The gold also shines through their clothing showing the heavenly joy. They can bring to tired human hearts.