



Ano ang Icon?

Praying with the Icon of
Our Mother of Perpetual Help
this 150 Years of Making her known

This Presentation is in 4 parts

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 - a. On the Jubilee Year and the 150th Jubilee of the entrustment of the Icon of OMPH
 - b. How I became interested in Icons
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 1. Some reflections on Icons and Iconography
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3. On the Language of Icons
 1. On the art and aesthetics of Iconography
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4. Our Mother of Perpetual Help – Tradition and Spirituality of the Icon
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- c. Aesthetic and Geometric Structure of the Icon
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This is not an exhaustive study on the Theology of Icons nor on Icon painting.

I am not an Iconographer. I cannot paint or write an Icon or at least I haven't tried.

My interest really is on the Spirituality and Praying with Icons.

Ang Icon bilang Misyonero



Ano ang paborito ninyong
imahen ni Birheng Maria?





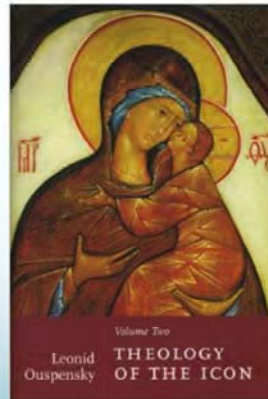
Mary in the icon is ugly compared to the smooth, fair, beautiful faces seen in statutes— Fatima, Lourdes, Manaog, Penafrancia



Mary in the icon is ugly compared to the smooth, fair, beautiful faces seen in statutes—Fatima, Lourdes, Manaog, Penafrancia

Isa sa pinakadakilang natuklasan sa 20th century ay ang icon.

Leopold Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*



eikón



- Larawan, kawangis, mga hugis na kumakatawan.
- Icon tulad ng mga relics ay mga bagay pinagtutuonan ng debosyon
- Ang mga icon ay duplicate ng prototype (mga banal na tao) tapat na kopya)

Transfiguration
Andrei Rublev 1405

- The word Ikon or icon, image, likeness, figure, type, comes from the ancient greek verb iko or ika, meaning, one look alike, similar and alike, appear and the same.
- In the history of art it is used as a technical term to describe a type of sacred image found in eastern churches.
- It is important to underline that them in the East, especially for the Orthodox Church:
- Icons refers exclusively to something that is real and true, that is, to something that relates to a given model and prototype, and does not relate to anything that is illusory, imagined or nonexistent. Icon – Image, figure, representation.



May mahigpit na ugnayan sa pagitan ng Icon at ng banal na taong isinasalarawan ng icon

It is an ancient belief in Icons especially in the Orthodox Church, that there is a firm bond or a link between the Icon and the person depicted in it.

Ang mga icon ay mga larawan ng matagumpay at maluwalhating Kristo, Maria, mga apostoles at mga santo; samakatuwid ang mga icon ay nagtuturo sa atin sa darating na panahon, sa ating huling hantungan



Icon represents Christ, Mary and the saints in heaven This is what Joel said yesterday that the end of time is the basis for looking at life in time—all is present

Ang mga icon ay di nagpapakita ng mga anyo ng mga santo noong sila ay nabubuhay dito sa lupa. Ang kanilang pagkatao ay napanibago (transfigured, sanctified); ang mga anyo sa icon ay nabubuhay na sa diwa ng resurrection, puspos ng liwanag na di galling sa mundong ito.

Marek Kotynski, *Meditations on the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help*, 43



Tayo ay nasanay mula sa simula sa western standards—kung kaya sa mga likha ng sining, ang hinahanap natin ay mga pisikal na kagandahan at ibang prinsipyo ng western art



**Icon ay tungkol sa katotohanan
hindi sa kagandahan;
samakatuwid ang icon ay mabisa
sa ebanghelisasyon.**



Pag sinabing perfect ang icon (Rublev's trinity), it is not due to western artistic standards but eastern purpose of the icon to convey the sacred truth

Icons ay mga larawan ni Jesus, Maria, Santo, at pangyayari sa kanilang buhay.

Maaring ito ay sa alinamang medium – kahoy, ivory, marble, needle work (knit) o tapestry, mosaic



Ivory



Wood and Gold



Miniature Mosaic



Marble

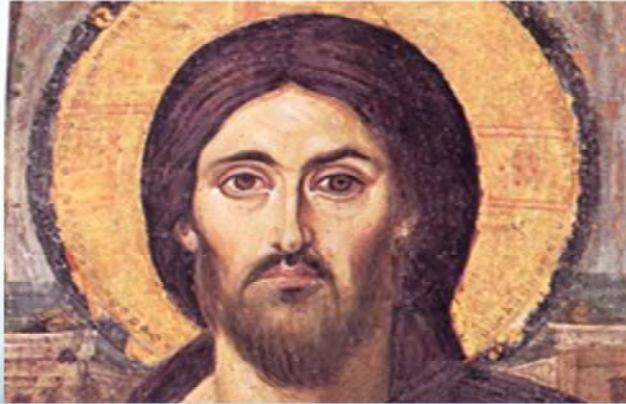


Needle Work Cross- Stitched

Icons are Images of the Holy, Jesus, Mary, Saints, and events in their life.

It could be on any medium – wood, ivory, marble, needle work or tapestry, mosaic.

Ang mga icon ay may mga malaking mata upang lumikha ng kaugnayan sa mga mananampalataya



Halimbawa ang pantokrator

**Ang mga mata ni Maria sa Icon
ng Mahal na Ina ng Laging
Saklolo ay ang ugnayan/tulay ng
ating buhay sa walang hanggang
buhay ng Diyos**



Mary's eyes gazing at us establishes the connection of the icon with our present realities. At the same time, however, Mary's gaze invites us to go beyond the present towards the eternal.

**Ang mga Icons
ay mula sa
kultura / mundo
/ simbahan na
banyaga sa
ating mga
Filipino.**



Theotokos "of the Sign" 12th c

Icons belong to a culture / world /Church foreign to us Filipinos. (I remember going to Athens and staying in a Religious community of Sisters of both Filipinos and Greeks. I started to appreciate the Icons they had in the house. I was so excited about them and they asked why the excitement on their decorations. Then I realized and they told me that they did not know the significance of these Icons. They asked me to give a whole day talk to their community on Icons in general. Imagine giving a talk on Icons to a community of Religious in the source of Holy Icons!



**Ang Icon ng
Ina ng Laging
Saklolo ay
galing sa
Byzantine
culture**

Just as I thought at the beginning that it was just like an ordinary picture of Mary. I did not know what an Icon was.

Byzantine Icons



Annunciation 15th c.



Hodegetria - 14th c.



Christ Redeemer
Source of life - 14th c.



The Dormition by
Theophan the Greek,
1392



Theotokos Eleusa 16th c.



Pantocrator 13th c.

This started my interest in the whole spirituality of Icons.

My interest on Icons and their Iconography started when I was first invited to give a talk on Icons...

Until this interest deepened and each time I am learning more and more about Icons...

African Icons



6th c Coptic Icon



Ethiopian Church Icon



Eritrean Church Icon





First half of the 6th century Ikon at St. Catherine's Monastery in Egypt.

Kristo ang Pantocrator **“Pinuno ng Lahat”** **Ang icon ni Kristo, Diyos-tao**

The icon represents the incarnated divine person, the Son of God who became Son of man, consubstantial with the Father through his divinity, consubstantial with us through his humanity.

Christ unified these two aspects in his life

Maria Theotokos

“Tagapagdala ng Diyos” Ina ng Diyos

Iba't-ibang icons ng
Theotokos.

- the Virgin *Kyriotissa*
(She who reigns in majesty)
- the Virgin *Hodegetria*
(She who shows the Way)
- the Virgin *Eleousa*
(Virgin of Loving Kindness)
- the Virgin *Orans*, with or
without the Child.
(Virgin at Prayer)



Mother of God Hodegetria – 14th century

We will discuss this in detail when we discuss the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help

Icon para sa mga Kapistahan (Festal Icons)



The Annunciation

14th c. Russian Icon



Pentecost

Theophanis the Cretan 16th c

Icon ng mga Apostol & Santo



Saint Peter



Saint Helena

Icon ng mga Anghel



Archangel Michael, Andrei Rublev (ca. 1370-1430)

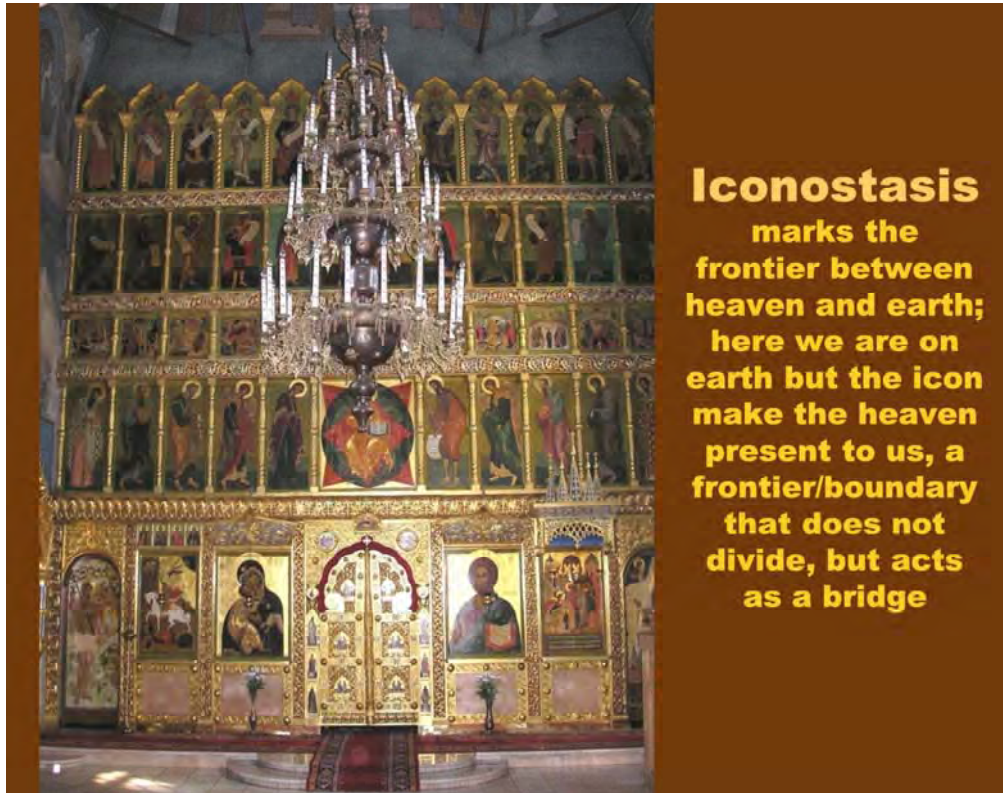


Archangel Gabriel 14th Century, Mount Athos



The 'Special icons' includes all icons that do not 'fit' in any of the previous categories.

- the iconostasis,
- churches and monasteries,
- the Holy Trinity,
- scenes of the life of Jesus other than the Feast days like the healing of the paralytic, the marriage in Cana, etc.



Iconostasis
marks the
frontier between
heaven and earth;
here we are on
earth but the icon
make the heaven
present to us, a
frontier/boundary
that does not
divide, but acts
as a bridge

The icon screen (iconostasis) marks the frontier between heaven and earth; here we are on earth but the icon make the heaven present to us, a frontier/boundary that does not divide, but acts as a bridge

**icon - bintana o pintuan patungo
sa walang hanggan (eternity)**



Icon as window to the eternal, you know what a window is, when you open a window, you gain a big perspective, you see the whole world, the whole environment where you are situated even as you are still part of the house

icon - pintuan patungo sa walang hanggan (eternity)
daan upang makapasok sa darating na panahon, isang
punto at lugar ng pagtatagpo at isang lugar ng
pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga santo



Icons ay pintuan, daan papasok, daan
upang makapasok sa darating na
panahon, isang punto at lugar ng
pagtatagpo at isang lugar ng
pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga santo,
pinto sa kaharalian ng langit, is a door,
way of entry into, means of access into
the age to come, a point of meeting
and a place of encounter with the
communion of saints → door into the

kingdom of heaven; fulfills a mediating function; makes the saints/persons in the icon present to us; we participate in the mystery that is depicted,

**icon - bintana o pintuan patungo
sa walang hanggan (eternity)**



– to show graphically how the icon is a window to eternity

**icon - bintana o pintuan patungo
sa walang hanggan (eternity)**



– to show graphically how the icon is a window to eternity

**creative tension sa pagitan ng
ating kasalukuyang buhay at
buhay na walang hanggan**



**Cosmic missionthe heavenly and cosmic dimensions of the liturgy
is also present in mission;**

Jesus the Supreme Icon



□ **Ang misteryo ng pagkatawang tao ni Jesus ang naging daan para sa lahat ng mga icons.**

□ **Jesus – the Icon of God**

“He is the image (icon) of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created.”
(Col 1:15-16)

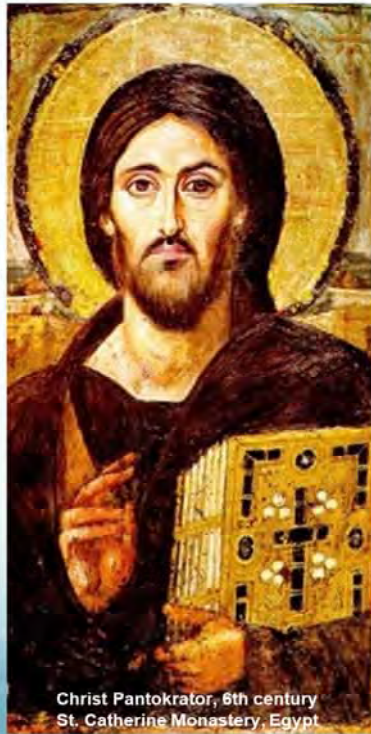
John 1: 14 – the word became flesh and lived amongst us and we have seen his glory, foundation of all Christian icononography—the mystery of incarnation; the incarnation has made possible for all icons, now God can be represented: St. John of Damascus—so I can make an image of God who cannot be seen; the icon of Christ safeguards the theology of icon

Jesus as the Supreme Icon

Christians originally applied this term to the Word

Incarnate.

“He is the image (icon) of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created.” (Col 1:15-16)



Christ Pantokrator, 6th century
St. Catherine Monastery, Egypt

**By contemplating on
Jesus the supreme icon
we discover the image
of God the Father and our
condition as children of
God.**

**He is the “gateway”
through which we enter
the kingdom of God.**

By contemplating on Jesus the supreme icon we discover the image of God the Father and our condition as children of God. He is the “gateway” through which we enter the kingdom of heaven.

Pag-unawa sa mga Icons



Virgin of Comfort, Sta. Francesca Rome 5thc

Upang maunawaan ang mga banal na Icons at ang kanilang mensahe, kailangan nating:

- Pumasok sa kanilang mundo,
- Alamin ang kanilang kultura at kasaysayan,
- Matutunan ang kanilang lengwahe at

I did not know what an Icon was until I entered its world, culture and its language.

Lengwahe ng mga Icon



Lengwahe ng Icon



Ang lengwahe ng Icons ay naiiba sa ibang visual arts lalong-lalo na ang galing sa Kanluran.

- **Perspective**
- **Time and Space**
- **Colors**
- **Symbolismo**
- **Layunin**

Sometimes the Holy Icons are not easy to see or read

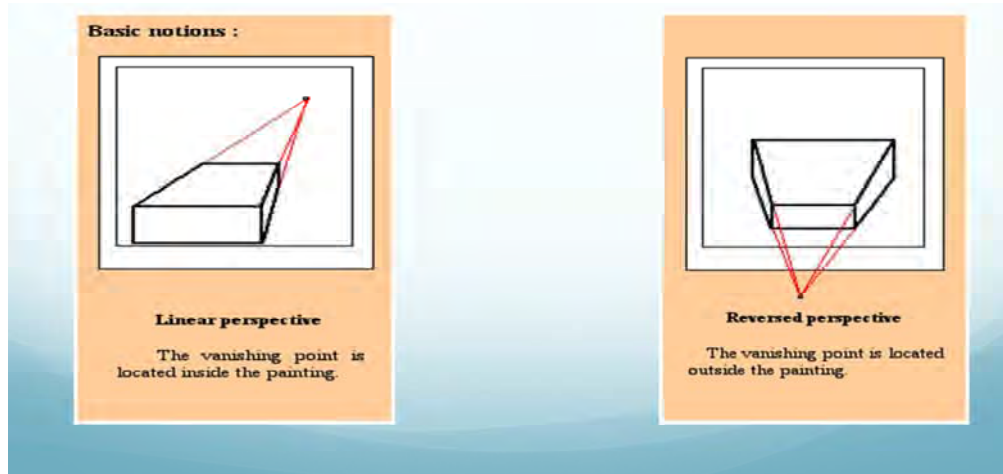
Perspective

- **Ang Western fine art ay pinangungunahan ng centric o linear perspective, halimbawa, photography, film.**
- **Ang mga Icons ay nilikha (sinulat) sa reverse perspective. Samakawid, ang pag-iisip ng buhay ditto sa mundo ay hindi extend sa mga icons.**



The language of Icons already differs to that of other visual arts. Western fine art was dominated with centric or sometimes called a linear perspective. The central so called objective perspective is characteristic to photography, film. The perspective on icons and frescos is quite different. They call it reverse or byzantine perspective. It is an expanding perspective, meaning that the lines coming from the viewer are not converging toward an imaginary remote point but are expanding, diverging away from the viewer.

Reverse perspective, na tinatawag ding inverse perspective, inverted perspective or Byzantine perspective, is a convention of perspective drawing where the further the objects are, the larger they are drawn.



Kung ano ang pinakamalayo ay siyang pinakamalabo; sa icon, kung ano ang pinakamalapit ay siyang pinakamalabo. May malalim na pakahulugan ito.



Linear perspective It is similar to a viewer looking through a window

The throne and footstool in this icon show reverse perspective, with lines converging towards the viewer.

Multiple centers aid us to comprehend phases of objects from multiple angles all at once and not satisfy ourselves with the illusion of one static and passive monocular cyclopic point of view.

The western art accepted this iconic approach only at the beginning of the 20th century.

Reverse Perspective is a way of describing God looking out at the world, through the icon. A God's perspective.

- **With this form of perspective the viewer is the point of view of the objects in the icon.**
- **Before an Icon, man is not the master and the virtual owner of the world but a participant in God' creation**

Christ Pantokrator, 6th century
St. Catherine Monastery, Egypt



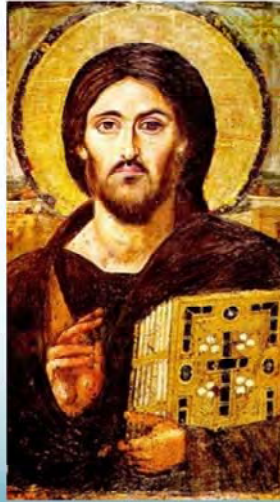
This is also sometimes called as the “God Perspective”. Before an Icon, man is not the master and the virtual owner of the world but a participant in God' creation.

Mas mahalaga kung paanong nakatitig ang Diyos at si Maria sa icon sa atin keysa kung paano tayo nakatitig kay Maria



reverse hermeneutics: how we apply our story in God's story, how we enter into the icon not the icon entering into our lives; the main focal point, the main framework, perspective is the icon not our world, our society, our culture, our selves, our values and attitudes as the framework of the icon

Ang icon una at higit sa lahat ay tungkol sa Diyos na patuloy na humahanap sa atin



Christianity is, above all, an intervention of God. It is not so much human's search for God as a descent of God's life to the human level. It is God who reveals himself, who manifests himself.

Marek Kotynski

God's story:

God is looking for us, that He reveals Himself to us, that He goes out to meet us with His presence that is full of love. They enter our world so as to bring mercy and inner peace and to invite us to participate in the invisible world, which we may sense with our inner senses, animated with the work of the Holy Spirit.

Marek Kotynski

Open Space and Semi-Circle



Descent of the Holy Spirit, Russia 1497



Trinity by Andrei Rublev 1425

The open space ay nagpapahiwatig sa bagong space na kung saan ang banal na Espiritu ay nanahan at kung saan tayo ay inaanyayahang lumahok at tanggapin ang kaganapan ng Espiritu nang sa gayon habang tayo ay nagninilay-nilay sa Icon, nabubuo natin ang circle.

Semi-circle, open space
Tayo ay di nasa labas ng icon kundi
bahagi ng icon



A Theology in Color



"An icon is theology in color"

- **In Iconography each color had its place and value.**
- **Different Colors - whether bright or dark - were never mixed but always used pure.**
- **In the Byzantine tradition, color was considered to have the same substance as words.**
- **It has its own value and meaning.**
- **The symbolism and meanings of the different colors are preserved in Iconography**

Iconography, that is the icon is a kind of language that in its own way by delineation and color faithfully expresses the teachings of the Orthodox Church. It is a theology that is expressed by use of colors, drawings, visual images and shapes. However this does not mean that icons are sort of hyrogliphs or sacred riddles which the dogmatics may translate using the language of conventional signs.

Shades and Gray



There is no shading in Icons. In western art, the contrast between shade and light is one of the most important tools of expression. In Iconography the carriers of the shadow are creatures of evil, heading towards self destruction and without a base in the existence of God.

Black is the color of evil and death. When mixing black and white together - Gray - wickedness and righteousness, it becomes the color of vagueness, the color of the void and nonexistence. There was no place for this color in the radiant world of the Icon

There is no shading in Icons. The contrast between shade and light is one of the most important expressive instruments in western art. Icons encompass everything. But they also permeated from within with the uncreated light of God. Carriers of the shadow are just creatures of the evil, crippling, diminished in their self destruction without a base in the existence of God.

Symbolism



Christ Emmanuel
Russia, 1697



Christ Pantokrator, 6th century
St. Catherine Monastery, Egypt



Virgin Kardiotissa
15th c



The language of symbols was prevalent among the early Christians. In Iconography, the truth and the teachings of the Church are expressed through art and symbols.

Icons are not just full of symbols but they are symbols in themselves

It is a generally known fact that the early Christian Church language of symbols was specially prevalent. The symbolism is explained first of all by the necessity to express through art the truth that cannot be directly represented, expounded. On the other hand, concealment for sometime of the fundamental christian mysteries from those who are preparing for baptism. The catechumens was established by the holy fathers and inspired by the scriptures. Speaking of the symbolic wordings when teaching the catechumens when preparing for baptism, St. Cyrill of Jerusalem says that all are allowed to listen to the Gospel, but the glory of annunciation belongs only those close to Christ. Consequently, the Lord spoke to those who are unable to hear in parables, while he explained the parables to his apostles in private.

