

Parish Office Communication

January 14, 2022

Good Morning All,

Today is the last day of the Parish Mission. Kyle Clement leaves after the morning topic today.

9:30-11:00 AM Demons go Where They Are Not Resisted ~ Angels Go Where they Are Invited

Knights of Columbus Yard Sale **tomorrow** at the Jockey Lot today from 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

1. Today's Readings: [Friday of the First Week in Ordinary Time | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: One of the most popular icons is that of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, also known as Our Lady of Succor or Our Lady of the Passion. There are several legends that surround the icon as well as many miracles associated with it. Many popes have venerated the icon.

3. Quote of the Day:

~'May the two names so sweet and so powerful, of Jesus and Mary, be always in our hearts and on our lips!" *St. Alphonsus Liguori*

***Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Pray for Us!***  
***St. Joseph, Pray for Us!***

--

Linda McCormick  
St. Joseph Catholic Church & School  
1200 Cornelia Road  
Anderson, SC 29621

Phone: (864) 225-5341, ext. 102  
Fax: (864) 225-6432

## The Meaning Behind the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Icon



The icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help represents the Christian mystery of Redemption.

The devotion to this Marian advocacy revolves around the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Succour), painted on wood, with background of gold. It is Byzantine in style and is supposed to have been painted in the thirteenth century. It represents the Mother of God holding the Divine Child while the Archangels Michael and Gabriel presenting Him the instruments of His Passion. Over the figures in the picture are some Greek letters which form the abbreviated words Mother of God, Jesus Christ, Archangel Michael, and Archangel Gabriel respectively.

The icon was brought to Rome towards the end of the fifteenth century by a pious merchant, who, dying there, ordered by his will that the picture should be exposed in a church for public veneration. It was exposed in the church of San Matteo in the famous Roman street of Via Merulana, which connects the basilicas of Saint Mary Major and Saint John Lateran. Crowds flocked to this church, and for nearly three hundred years many graces were obtained through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. The picture was then popularly called the Madonna di San Matteo. The church was served for a time by the Hermits of Saint Augustine.

These Augustinians were still in charge when the French invaded Rome (1812) and destroyed the church. The picture disappeared; it remained hidden and neglected for over forty years, but a series of providential circumstances between 1863 and 1865 led to its rediscovery in an oratory of the Augustinian Fathers at Santa Maria in Posterula.

Pope Pius IX, who as a boy had prayed before the picture in San Matteo, became interested in the discovery. But at that time, the ruins of San Matteo were in the grounds of a convent of the Redemptorists - the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, founded by St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787).

The Father General of the Redemptorists, Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, decided to bring the whole matter to the attention of the Pope. The Pope listened attentively and felt sure it was God's will that the icon should be again exposed to public veneration and the logical site was their church of St. Alphonsus, standing as it did between the Basilicas of St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran. The Holy Father at once took a piece of paper and wrote a short memorandum ordering the Augustinian Fathers of St. Mary in Posterula to surrender the picture to the Redemptorists, on condition that the Redemptorists supply the Augustinians with another picture of Our Lady or a good copy of the icon of Perpetual Help.

The Icon meant much to the Augustinians, but when the two Redemptorists came armed with the Pope's signed memorandum, what could they do but obey? On January 19, 1866, Fathers Marchi and Bresciani brought the miraculous picture to St. Alphonsus'

church. Preparations were now made to inaugurate the new public reign of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. On April 26th, a great procession was staged in which the picture was carried throughout the Esquiline region of Rome. Upon returning to the church, the picture was enthroned over the high altar, in a resplendent shrine-niche especially constructed for it.

The report of marvelous healings spread rapidly throughout the city of Rome and people came by the hundreds to visit the shrine. Soon the whole area around the altar was filled with abandoned crutches and canes and several whole glass-covered cabinets were filled with gold and silver thanksgiving offerings in the shapes of miniature hearts, arms, legs and other votive offerings. Scarcely two weeks after the solemn exposition of the picture, Pope Pius IX himself came to visit the shrine. He stood quietly before it for a long time and then exclaimed: "How beautiful she is!".

Pope Leo XIII, the next pontiff, had a copy of the picture on his desk so that he might see it constantly during his working day. St. Pius X sent a copy of the icon to the Empress of Ethiopia and granted an indulgence of 100 days to anyone who repeated the phrase: "Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us."

Pope Benedict XV had the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help placed immediately over his chair of state in the throne room. Here it could be seen by all just over his head, as if to say: "Here is your true Queen!".

Pope Pius IX told the Redemptorists, in speaking to them of the treasure he had committed to their care: "Make her known!" It seems as though they hardly needed the exhortation. In the United States, they built the first Our Lady of Perpetual Help church in the Roxbury section of Boston, and it was eventually raised to the honor of a "Papal Basilica" by Pope Pius XII.

### **Symbolism of the Icon of Perpetual Help**

The influence of Eastern icons in the West, around the XII and XIII centuries brought a class of icons called *Cardiotissa*, from the Greek word *kardia*, meaning heart. *Cardiotissa* means "having a heart" or showing sympathy and mercy and compassion. In them the face of Our Lady appears full of sorrow, yet supremely dignified in her contemplation of the sufferings of her Son. His passion is represented by angels holding instruments of His passion, most often the cross, the lance, the sponge, and the nails.

The Our Mother of Perpetual Help icon is of this type. The angels holding the instruments of the Passion have their hands covered with a protecting veil as a sign of reverence in handling sacred objects.

The Child Jesus is shown with an adult face and a high brow, indicating His divine Mind of infinite intelligence. As God, He knew that the angelic apparition was prophetic of His future passion. Yet in His human nature as a small child, He is frightened and runs to His Mother for protection. Our Lady hastily picks Him up and clasps Him to her bosom. This action is indicated by the fact that the Lord's right foot is curled about the left ankle and in such haste that His right sandal has become loosened and hangs by a single strap. Further action is indicated by the way the Child Jesus clasps His Mother's right hand with both of His, holding tightly to Our Lady's thumb.

Our Lady is clothed in a dress of dark red which was long reserved in the Byzantine world for the Empress alone, indicating the Queenship of Mary.

Some commentators on color claim that bluish purple became the color of penance in the Western Church (during Lent and Advent) because purple is a combination of blue and red. The blue reminds us of heaven, to which we wish to arrive by our penance, and the red recalls martyrdom, because all penance requires a dying to oneself, especially mortifying inordinate desire for food and pleasure. The archangels Gabriel and Michael are often shown wearing tunics of purple since they carry the instruments of the passion and death of Christ. The figures of the icon are identified with abbreviations of their names and Mary is designated by her chief title to glory: Mother of God.

Our Lady's face is of unspeakable majesty and calm and yet her large eyes, partly closed, express ineffable sorrow and sympathy. Our Lady is not looking at Jesus, but rather to us, to express compassion for us in our fears and sorrows.

### **What Our Lady of Perpetual Help Means for Us**

Just as the Child Jesus fled into the arms of his Mother when he was frightened, so too do we flee into the arms of our Blessed Mother with child-like confidence whenever fear envelopes our hearts. Just as the Virgin Mother consoled and comforted her Divine Child, so too does she console and comfort us, her spiritual children, in our afflictions. We can always come to her in our time of need and receive her help.

In this iconography, Mary is represented as the one who guides us to the Redeemer. The Virgin Mother is also our Help who intercedes with her Son on our behalf. The star painted

## Parish Office Communication

on Mary's veil, centered on her forehead, highlights her role in the plan of salvation as both the Mother of God and our Mother.

To this day, the Church of St. Alphonsus in Rome displays the original icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. They are the guardians and promoters of the holy icon, the only religious order entrusted with the task of doing so with a venerated image of Our Lady.

*Sources: catholicnewsagency.com and catholiccompany.com*