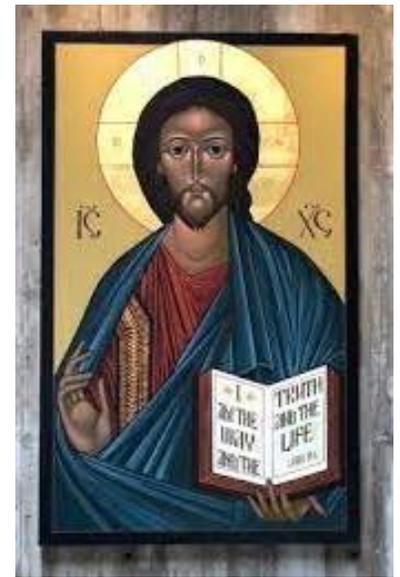


## Christ Pantocrator

In this icon, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, the Ruler of All (Pantocrator) stands before us, right hand raised in blessing, left hand holding the Word:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)

The word Pantocrator is Greek, meaning "Ruler of All." The image expresses the central reality of the Christian faith; the Divine Majesty of the creator and ruler of all the world, made flesh and therefore visible to us in the person of Christ Jesus our redeemer. The oldest known icon of Christ Pantocrator was written in the sixth century and preserved in the remote monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai desert. The location enabled the image to survive the destruction of most icons during the iconoclastic era in Byzantine history, (726 to 815 AD.) Our reproduction is of a contemporary icon, akin in style to innumerable Christ Pantocrator icons produced over the last 1500 years.



On the inside of the central dome in Orthodox churches is frequently found an immense mosaic or painting of Christ Pantocrator. The Pantocrator image typically found in church domes is very stern and formidable, expressing in full the concept of "Ruler of All." Smaller, personal icons, while retaining the same majesty, more often represent a gentle and compassionate Lord. Our reproduction is of this more gentle type and provides for us a warm, approachable portrait of our personal Lord and Savior.

In this image of Christ Pantocrator, Jesus is presented in a half-length pose, looking directly at the viewer, with his left hand holding the Sacred Word and his right hand raised in blessing. He is dressed in the traditional garb of tunic and cloak. His cloak, called in Greek a "himation" is dark blue signifying the mystery of His divine life. His tunic is a bright crimson red to signify His human blood shed for us all. The garments of the Messiah in Isaiah 63:1-4 were red, as was the soldier's cloak put on Jesus' shoulders during his passion (Matthew 27:28.)

The Bible he holds in his left hand is open to display a passage from the Gospel. Various passages are used in Pantocrator icons as are various languages. The most common is Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all you that are weary..." Other verses used have been John 7:24, John 8:12, John 13:34, John 14:6 (in our example), Matthew 11:27, and Matthew 25:34.

The arrangement of fingers on Jesus' right hand raised in blessing is significant. Two different forms may

be seen in iconography. These two forms date from a schism that split the Russian Orthodox church in 1667. Patriarch Nikon instituted reforms that a group of people who came to be known as the Old Believers refused to accept. This icon displays the Old Believer form: Thumb, ring finger and little finger are bent together symbolizing the divine and human natures of Christ, while the forefinger and slightly bent middle finger are held upright. The second, or State Church form spells out Iesous Khristos, the Greek shortened form of Christ's name, "IC XC." The index finger is straight, forming the "I," the middle and little fingers are curved into "C" shapes, and the thumb and ring finger cross slightly to form the "X."

Christ's halo, the iconographic symbol for sanctity, is inscribed with a cross and the Greek letters omicron, omega, nu, spelling "HO ON." In English, this becomes "Who Am," the name used for God in Exodus 3:14. On the background is written "IC XC."

The face of Jesus follows ancient traditions. The eyes are large and open, looking directly into the soul of the viewer. The forehead, identified as the seat of wisdom, is high and convex. The nose is long and slender, contributing a look of nobility. The mouth is small and closed in the silence of contemplation. The hair is curled and flowing, recalling the endless flow of time. The neck and body are powerful reminders of His strength and majesty.

## Our Lady of Vladimir

This simple and elegant icon of the Virgin and Child is patterned after a very famous original, painted in 12th century Constantinople, and referred to by many names; "The Virgin of Tenderness," "The Soul of Russia," and most frequently, "Our Lady of Vladimir." The optional memorial of Our Lady under this title is celebrated on May 21.



Icons of Mary and the Christ Child have a long and rich tradition in the Eastern churches. The first one was painted by Luke with Mary herself as a model according to ancient legend. There are more than 150 named versions in Russian iconography alone. These icons are much more than portraits of mother and child. They are the principle images of the Incarnation (God become man), and of the Church, representing communion of the Divine (the Child/Word of God) and the human (Mary). These icons may be classified into groups based on the degree of relationship or affection between mother and child that is shown to us. The earliest ones show Jesus enthroned on Mary's arm, both facing the viewer, with no human affection whatsoever (Hodigitria types). Icons from the late Russian period show very great affection being expressed in both directions (Umilenie or Glykophilousa types). This icon is intermediate, both in history and emotion, and is classified as a "Virgin of Tenderness" type.

The original Our Lady of Vladimir was painted by an anonymous Byzantine iconographer in the style of the Macedonian period (857 - 1056 AD). The icon was brought to Kiev in 1131, then transferred to the city of Vladimir in 1155, thus its present name. In 1395, it was again transferred to Moscow where it remains to this day, now in the Tretyakov Gallery. The icon has been present at a great many political events in Russian history, and is famous for many miraculous interventions. It has managed to survive numerous fires and Tartar attacks. Because of this, the icon has also been called "the soul of Russia." Our Lady of Vladimir is one of the most famous and most frequently copied icons of all time, due both to its long association with Russian religion and politics and to its extraordinary beauty. Our reproduction is of a twentieth century rendering, clearly and beautifully executed by Sister Mary Charles.

The young Jesus presses his cheek to his mother's, wrapping his left arm around her neck. Mary holds Him close with her right arm, and gestures toward Him with the left, as if to say to us: "Behold the Lamb

of God! Behold the Incarnate Word!" Both faces are drawn to convey theological meaning rather than realistic faces. Jesus' face shows affection for his mother, but the large, expressive eyes show divine depths of wisdom and experience. Mary's face in the original icon is as famous in Russia for its enigmatic expression as that of Da Vinci's Mona Lisa in the west. Her mouth is thin and narrow, her nose long. Her eyes are very large. Her gaze is toward the viewer, but you cannot make eye contact. Mary is gazing at infinity or gazing within, with an ineffable expression of sorrow, as if recalling Simeon's words, "...and a sword will pierce your own soul too." (Luke 2:35)

The overall composition has the form of a triangle inscribed in a rectangle. This is intended to represent the mystery of the Trinity coming to reside in the world. The top of the triangle is shifted to the right, introducing suppleness, while Mary's head inclines back to the left, centering her halo. Gold leaf is used on her halo and that of Jesus to express unearthly light, the divine origin of sanctity. Greek letters are inscribed on the background. "ICXC" is an abbreviation for Jesus Christ, Iesous Khristos. "MPΘΥ" is an abbreviation for Mother of God, Meter Theou.

Jesus is not dressed as a baby. He is wearing an adult cloak called in Greek a hymation. The cloth is woven with gold thread, symbolic of his divine dignity and royalty. His neck is drawn overlarge, representing strength and the breath of the Holy Spirit.

Mary wears a maphorion over her dress. The original Lady of Vladimir's maphorion is black, although nearly all Marian icons show it deep red like our version. Many repaintings and the ravages of time make it difficult to determine if the original's was always black or is simply that color now. The maphorion is adorned with three stars on the head and shoulders (one is hidden by the child). These are symbolic of Mary's perpetual virginity; before, during, and after her Son's birth.

## +Mary Charles McGough, O.S.B.

Sister Mary Charles (Mary Helen) McGough, OSB, 82, of St. Scholastica Monastery, died on Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007, at the Monastery. She entered the Duluth Benedictines on Sept. 8, 1943, and made her first monastic profession on Jan. 6, 1946. On Aug. 15, 1970, Sister Mary Charles celebrated her Silver Jubilee and in 1995 her Golden Jubilee. She was in her 61st year of monastic profession.



Sister Mary Charles (Molly) was born to Justin Hugh McGough and Ruth (Brownell) on April 18, 1925, in Cloquet. She received her high school education at Duluth Cathedral High School. She received a Bachelor of Arts from The College St. Scholastica, a Masters in Education from the University of Minnesota, and a Masters of Fine Arts from Notre Dame University.

Sister Mary Charles began her teaching career in 1949 as a second grade teacher at St. Bridget's School, Minneapolis. The following year she taught Art and Religion at Stanbrook Hall, Duluth. She taught in the Elementary Education Program at The College St. Scholastica (1951-1954) and then grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 at St. Anthony's School in Duluth (1954 to 1959). From 1959 to 1967 she headed the Art Department of The College St. Scholastica. During the summers, Sister Mary Charles taught catechism classes at several sites, including Cass Lake and the Nett Lake Reservation.

She was well known for beginning the summer 'Barn Program' in 1968 when the carriage house on the McCabe property became an art studio. There she taught children various creative activities: writing, science, dance, song, musical instruments, and art. This program continued for 18 years. The Barn became Sister's home for many years and was a place where visitors were always greeted by the resident dog.

Sister Mary Charles loved animals, and there was always a dog and a cat to keep her company. Sister Mary Charles was gifted in many art mediums: wood cuts, wood carvings, ceramics, sculptures, and watercolors, to name a few. She also designed the cover of the Sisters Today magazine for more than 30 years.

Her works can be found today throughout the world-in people's homes, in houses of worship, and even outdoors. She was not afraid to commit to huge projects such as the wall at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center in Duluth, the logo on the outside of St. Mary's Medical Center, the Peace Doors at The College of St. Scholastica, and a wall sculpture at the Benedictine Health Center in Duluth. Sister was commissioned to do many creative or artistic projects for various organizations and for churches of many religious denominations. Indeed, her work was quite ecumenical as she established relationships with and provided art for Temple Israel and for Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Catholic churches, to name a few.

Sister Mary Charles began studies in iconography in 1990. Her subsequent work with icons was commissioned by individuals and parishes nationwide. Her commissioned pieces included 'Mother of Compassion' at St. Olaf Catholic Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, 'Our Lady of Glastonbury' at Glastonbury Abbey in Hingham, Massachusetts, and 'St. Bernard of Clairvaux,' at the church named for him in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Sister Mary Charles was especially honored to have created 'Our Lady of Compassion' icon for the Diocesan AIDS Ministry Office in Worcester, Massachusetts, where each AIDS patient receives a copy of that image.

As Sister Mary Charles' need for larger studio space grew, she created Subiaco Studio, located in the old St. Anthony School. Sister Mary Charles had a passion for people as well as art. That was evident during her teaching and throughout the years of children's summer programs at the Barn.

Sister said her greatest joy was teaching, or as she would say, 'in helping others discover the creative spark within themselves.' She always made sure there would be sufficient scholarships to provide for young people who wanted to attend but could not afford the fee.

Sister's Irish wit and humor were evident in her relationships with others and during the many watercolor and iconography workshops she taught. She instilled in others a sense of the power of art: 'I know that art has the power to teach, to heal, to comfort, to challenge, to entertain, and to help people pray,' she said.

Sister Mary Charles was a long-time member of Pax Christi, an international peace organization, and could always be counted on to be a part of a peace rally or to write a letter to the editor when she saw some injustice that needed attention. She was dedicated to the work of the Damiano Center, to the

Loaves and Fishes Community, to CHUM, and to any other organization that cared for poor or marginalized people. She was more than generous with her time and talent to support the just treatment of all people.