

“Our Mother of Salvation” – A Reflection

A successful work of art needs to combine two layers: the visible layer and the invisible layer. In this painting, entitled “Our Mother of Salvation,” the visible layer is found in the “tangible” elements of the image of Our Blessed Mother which convey key essentials of our Catholic Faith and the profound relationship we have with Our Blessed Mother and her profound role in the salvation of the human race. The invisible layer is found in the composition and design elements of the painting which conveys a hidden language of truth regarding our relationship with God and His offer of salvation through the Blessed Mother’s Son, Our Lord Jesus. Both the visible and invisible layers of a painting communicate and are worthy of reflection for the full meaning of the painting to be communicated and experienced.

In this painting entitled "Our Mother of Salvation" we approach the painting and the feel energy and activity in the burst of clouds and Our Lady's flowing garments. We experience that as we approach Our Lady in the painting, she is, in fact, approaching us; conveying our relationship with her.

While Our Lady has a concerned pensive expression there is still established a sense of joy and a loving smile felt by the U shaped clouds at the top of the image which continues through her face – echoing God’s smiling on us and upon us, through Mary – the Highly Favored one (Luke 1:28). Our Mother is loving and accepting. She does not judge us. Her pensiveness shows concern for our needs. She is listening to our sighs; note that her ears are not covered by her veil. The downward shape in her veil and lines in the clouds embrace us like arms that hug. This conveys God’s embrace and God’s desire to offer us salvation and a relationship that will last forever. The upward curved bottom of Mary’s veil cradles us as a mother cradles her child. Mary is the “Theotokos” – Mother of God, and so also “Our Mother of Salvation,” who cradles us in love.

Our Lady's features are mostly drawn in horizontal and vertical lines. These kinds of lines are part of the language of the invisible layer. The horizontal and vertical lines establish feelings of stability and authority. Mary has stability and authority because “the Almighty has done great things” for her and she is “Most blessed amongst women and blessed is the fruit of her womb” – Jesus. (Luke 1)s Vertical lines are especially found in the Rosary and Scapular which are pillars of Our Catholic faith besides the vertical lines in her blue garments for she is the Seat of Wisdom, The Ark of the Covenant which contained the Divine presence of Our Lord, Jesus– the source of our Salvation. (There is no salvation through anyone

else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved. Acts 4:12)

As we come to our Blessed Mother one of her knees is more pronounced. It is her lap where we as children can place our hands folded in prayer and love. The drapery of her blue dress directs our eyes to her folded hands in prayer, placed on an angle. She is praying with us. Her fingers point us to the heavenly space of God. A space of warmth, peace and calm where Jesus's Kingdom is fully realized.

At the bottom of the painting is found our earthly existence. It is a dark environment representing our human existence of trials while on this earth. One place that offers "Light" in the darkness of the world is the Church. Jesus is the "Light of the World" and it is in the Church Jesus founded that we find the "Light" -relationship with God and relationship with others, here and heaven, in the Body of Christ. Whether we exist in a war torn area of the globe or have trouble in our family relationships or trouble in our very own souls, the purpose of this painting is to lovingly encourage us to go to Our Father in Heaven. Through prayer, trusting in the Divine Mercy of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist we receive at Mass. The painting conveys a confidence that Jesus's promises of His Kingdom will be fully realized and His Peace will exist on earth as it is in Heaven.

Lift up your heart and find comfort in this beautiful painting of Our Blessed Mother entitled, "Our Mother of Salvation". Our Lady's mystical role unveiled to us throughout the centuries can be found in details in the painting. "Our Mother of Salvation" is dressed with the sun and a crown of stars as described in the Book of Revelation. (Rev. 12:1) The thorns in her crown remind us she is Our Mother of Sorrows and through using the gifts of Faith, Hope and Love, her sorrow is turned into joy as Jesus conquers sin, suffering and death through His Life, Death, and Resurrection. Mary's blue garment is inspired by the heavenly image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The gold belt represents the gold belt of Truth. On her chest is represented the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady. Devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart began in the 1200's but was particularly asked for by Heaven with the Miraculous Medal given to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830 and again at Fatima in 1917. "Our Mother of Salvation" is ever present to us, her spiritual children. We entrust to her our needs particularly when praying the Holy Rosary and remembering Jesus' Divine Mercy which is represented on the scapular. An image painted for our troubled times "Our Mother of Salvation" is always listening to our prayers and sighs as she directs our intentions to God the Father, through Jesus her Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection Questions:

How do you feel when you first look at the painting? What draws your attention? What truths about your relationship with Mary do you notice in this painting? Do you see her care for you? Do not feel her love and attention?

How does the “invisible layer” of the painting convey relationship with God to you? The “smile” in the clouds, the inbreaking of the heavenly kingdom, in the sending of Mary as intercessor?

In a dark and troubled world, how does the Church offer you “Light”? What is the “Light” you have been given in the Church? How does reflecting on the mysteries of the life of Christ in the Rosary help give you “Light”? How should Mary intercede for you today? (recall the “Wedding Feast of Cana,” John 2)

How can you pray with Our Mother of Salvation for the salvation of the world? How does the Chaplet of Divine Mercy help? How does the call to pray for the salvation of the world, by the Church, effect you? How do you answer the call? Do you offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the salvation of souls?

Pray the “Hail Holy Queen” as you pray with the painting:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope!

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.

To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, Most Gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us.

And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

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