

OUR LADY OF CANADA
"The Icon Of The Theotokos Of Canada"
©1995

Commissioned in 1994 by the Very Reverend Joseph Royer, now Vladyka +Joseph of the Eparchy of Edmonton and all Western Canada (Orthodox Church Of Canada) at All Saints Orthodox Cathedral in Edmonton, Alberta Canada. The new Canadian Icon was completed in May of 1995 . The icon of "Our Lady Of Canada", also known as the "The Canadian Icon Of The Most Holy Theotokos", was written by André J. Prevost, an iconographer who currently resides in North Vancouver BC, Canada.

The inscription on the back of the icon reads as follows:

OUR LADY OF CANADA
Come, All Ye Peoples, And Let Us Praise Her
Who Alone Is Undeiled;
She Who, Foretold By The Prophets,
The Mother Preordained Before All Ages.
O Lord, At Her Intercession
Grant Our Country Thy Peace And Great Mercy

The icon is 20 in. x 28 in. and is written in Acrylic on wood with a background of 22K Patent Gold. The design of the icon is based on the traditional Mother of God, with the same stately attitude of the Theotokos ('God-Bearer') and of the Christ-Child. The striking difference is found in the 'maphorion' (veil) of the Theotokos. Unlike the traditional solid colour, the Mother of God is clothed with an embroidered 22K Gold pattern of the Maple Leaf which is the national symbol of Canada. The pattern is set upon a cream-coloured background with the traditional stars and trim.

The two archangels on either side in the upper portion of the icon are presenting symbols of Canada to Christ; 1) the one on the left holds an orb with an image representing Canada itself, and 2) the orb on the right contains the red Maple Leaf. The Maple leaf is the one national symbol that is recognized by all Canadians and through-out the world. The iconographer's key focus from the beginning was to avoid the often used technique of simply adding a symbol being held in the hand. It is not a true and total incorporation of the symbol within both the visual and spiritual aspects of the icon. The iconographer wanted to take the most significant Canadian symbol and weave it into the icon and present it to the Mother of God in due homage, reverence, and love. The natural gesture was to present Her with the most precious cloth in which upholds her majesty, the love of Canadians for Her, and Her constant intercession on our behalf and that of Canada. No symbol was to be placed within Her right hand as it immediately impeded the crucial realities of 'guiding' and 'presenting'. These are far too central to the truth of the icon. The archangels have the task of presenting the Canadian symbols to Christ for His blessing and protection. The Mother of God holds Christ aloft and upright on the left arm. Christ is seated upright, holding the book of the Living Word with His left hand and blessing the spectator with His right hand. The Mother of God's head is slightly inclined towards Him but does not turn Her look to Him.

With Her eyes fixed on the spectator, Her right hand guides the spectator to Christ. Her whole attitude shows us mercy and intercedes before Her Son on our behalf. She also presents Christ to mankind - to Canada.

Both tunics of the Mother of God and the Infant-Emmanuel are blue, symbol of the spiritual and heavenly. The colours of the maphorion and of the himation are that of the earth. Christ's tunic also bears the symbol of the Trinity and has the band across His shoulders which both symbolize His stature as King of Kings and the yoke which He bore for us, the cross. The stars on the Mother of God themselves represent the perpetual virginity . The icon has the usual inscriptions for both the Theotokos and the Infant-Emmanuel: "MPOY" meaning The God-Bearer/Mother of God, and "ICXC" meaning Jesus Christ , based on the Greek word for fish which contains the letters which were the initials of five words directly corresponding to: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour". The use of gold leafing is prevalent in icons as it symbolizes the Light of God - Light in its perfection.