



Ste. Anne Icon 2017 ©
By the hand of Andre J Prevost
A collaborative project with Father Garry Laboucane OMI
for Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage

MIYO STE. ANNE, / Good Ste. Anne

The differences within this icon are two-fold. Aside from it being set within a First Nations context, unlike most traditional icons of Ste. Anne where she is depicted along with the Theotokos, the prime focus of this icon is of Ste. Anne as 'grandmother'. She is portrayed as a Plains First Nations grandmother in traditional regalia and with her grandson Jesus Christ, also in regalia. Saint Anne embodies the grandmother figure, having a respected place in Aboriginal societies, and pivotal within the preservation and teaching and formation within 'the culture'. This icon is set within the dance, a culmination of this teaching with her grandson, who in turn is so loving and honoring of his grandmother.

The dance is central to Indigenous culture, and based upon honour, respect, joy, and the 'learning from the elders'.

This dance setting has Ste. Anne and Christ portrayed as the 'Head Dancers'. *'Head Dancers are the designated female and male dancer, who are appointed to lead all the other dancers. This position is one of honour, with all other dancers offering the deserved respect. For any given set of songs, no other dancer will dance until the heads dancers commence.'*

www.shannonthunderbird.com. This symbolism is central for the icon, both within the actual cultural setting, but also within the global community of Faith.

Ste. Anne is wearing a fringed white buckskin regalia with a pale ochre yoke, and with beaded white moccasins and leggings. Jesus is portrayed as a young man, also wearing traditional

regalia in reds and blues. Ste. Anne's face as looking upwards (indicating vision) and Jesus is looking afar (indicating his awareness of what is to come).

The setting of the icon is representational of a background of Lac Ste. Anne. *See 'Lac Ste. Anne pilgrimage site'.

The icon is written on a panel of Baltic ply on a 1 ¾" stretcher frame and has a narrow painted frame in colours seen in Ste. Anne's regalia; pale ochre, black, and a fine russet red outline. The sides of the panel are each painted in a colour of the four directions; white at the top, yellow on the left, red on the bottom, and dark blue on the right. Black is commonly used but the dark blue is preferred by the Cree People.

The icon was completed in time for the 2017 Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage, held in July at the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage Grounds in Alberta, Canada.

In 1876 Pope Pius IX declared her as the Patroness of Canada.

Additional background information:

"Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage site"

"A long-established annual meeting place for Aboriginal peoples, this lake became a Catholic pilgrimage site in the late 19th century. Since 1889, First Nations and Métis people have travelled here in late July to celebrate the Feast of Saint Anne, widely revered as the mother of the Virgin Mary and the grandmother of Jesus. Saint Anne embodies the grandmother figure honoured in many Canadian Aboriginal societies. Lac Ste. Anne is an important place of spiritual, cultural and social rejuvenation, central aspects of traditional summer gatherings for indigenous peoples.

*In the past, Native families, who in the fall had scattered to winter camps and trap lines, gathered in the summer for the buffalo hunt. First called **Wakamne** or God's Lake by the [Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation](#) who live on the west end of the Lake and **Manito Sahkahigan** or Spirit Lake by the Cree, Lac St. Anne is the site of the annual Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage, one of the most unique and memorable spiritual gatherings in North America.*

The pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne blends well with traditional Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and cultural practices. Aboriginal cultures have strong female figures and, generally speaking, grandmothers have a respected place within this society. As the grandmother of Christ, Saint Anne can be accepted into this tradition. The pilgrimage, which takes place on the week of her feast day, July 26, coincides with the time when traditional summer gatherings were held. The pilgrimage allows Aboriginal people to once again come together to visit, to share and to celebrate much as they did in the traditional summer gatherings. Today as many as 40,000 pilgrims make their way to the shores of Lac Ste. Anne. Many come in search of healing and spiritual renewal. This pilgrimage, has become the largest annual Catholic gathering in Western Canada.

The pilgrimage is especially close to the hearts of our many First Nations and Metis people who attend faithfully each year." Park Canada

“Grandmothers of the Metis (& Cree) Nation” Judy Iseke-Barnes

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“...this need for women’s stories reflects the needs of the peoples to hear a more complete account of the lives of their peoples, including stories about the lives of Cree and Métis grandmothers who are the foundation of communities. We need these stories if we are to understand fully ourselves, our culture, and our histories within the cultural, social, and economic history of Métis/Cree communities.”

“She was the one who taught me that the earth was my mother, and made me fanatical about searching her out. She made me look into my Indian side, and there I found it. But I had to dig through a lot of stuff because they said “Mother,” but there was no real connection to her, it was only the “Father,” the “Grandfathers” that have the power; the influence of Christianity had pushed her out and the white side didn’t even say “Mother” anymore. But this teacher told me that once, a long time ago, we all had “Mother,” and that we were unbalanced because we could no longer revere her (Griffiths & Campbell, 1997, p. 20).

“Campbell further understood the importance of women through the teachings of women like Rose Auger, a Cree Elder from Alberta. Auger shared teachings about women, men, and balance. Indian people must wake up! We were in touch but now we are not. Part of this waking up means replacing women to their rightful place in society, no power or medicine that has all force unless it’s balanced. The woman must be there also. When we still had our culture, we had the balance. The women made ceremonies, and she was recognized as being united with the moon, the earth and all the forces on it. We must remember the loving power of grandmothers and mothers. (Auger, quoted in Voyageur, 2000).”