



## The Theotokos for Protection

The icon of The Theotokos for Protection (also known as The Intercession of the Theotokos, or the Protection of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary) depicts the miracle of a joyous revelation of the protection of the Theotokos and is based on Marian apparitions that have appeared as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century in Constantinople during times of war and siege.

In this image, the Virgin Mary is surrounded by a luminous aureole and holds a veil in her outstretched arms. The veil symbolizes her great love for mankind and the protection of her intercession spreading over the world, represented here by the two churches – the onion dome represents the Eastern church while the gable roof church represents the West. In the East, this icon is also known as the “Pokrov” – which is a Russian word that means both protection and veil.

The Feast of the Intercession of the Mother of God is celebrated in Ukraine on October 14 as a religious, national, and family holiday. In early 2022, I joined together with a group at the Classical Iconography Institute writing "Pocket Icons" (about 1.5" x 2"), that were sent to Ukraine by the Archdiocese of Portland through the Eparchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to the people in war torn Ukraine. The image on these icons was a detail of the Theotokos of Protection with the veil, and the Institute created 250 of these miniature icons over the months as a prayer for peace.

This beautiful image and project inspired me to write the fuller icon of Theotokos for Protection. The icon has become a meditative prayer on the great love and protection of the Holy Mother, much needed in our world today.

The Holy Protection is based on the geometry of vesica piscis, symbolizing protection, mediation, hope and refuge.

*Cheri Munske, Iconographer*

