



Our Lady of the Sign

This icon depicts a prophecy in Isaiah,

"Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign; Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." (God is with us)

This icon is also known as the "Platytera", which in Greek means "More spacious", referring to the Blessed Mother as being "more spacious than the heavens", because she carried Jesus Christ, God incarnate, creator of the universe, inside her womb.

Here we see the Mother of God during the Annunciation declaring, *"Be it done unto me according to thy word"*, when *"the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"*. Our Blessed Mother's arms are open in the "orans" prayer posture, and Christ is depicted in her center, at the core of her being, and of who she is. Christ is also encircled by a mandorla, representing His divine glory and the heavenly realm. His left hand holds a scroll, symbolic of His role as teacher, while His right hand is raised to bless us. With Christ dwelling within her, Our Lady literally becomes the throne of God - the ark of the new covenant. The Cherubim on her right and left remind us that they were also on either side of the mercy seat of the ark of the old covenant.

I have always been drawn to this image. As I created, I reflected more deeply upon its message and the prototype. Through prayer, research, and the act of painting, the icon continued to reveal more of its meaning.

The underlying geometry relies on the circular symbol of infinity. I am inspired by image's harmony, balance, and peace, despite the sadness in our Blessed Mother's eyes. The icon reflects the moment when Our Lady expressed her complete submission to the Father's will. Despite knowing it would be a path of great difficulty and sorrow, there peace and joy, knowing that she is solidly in God's will. With Our Lady's arms raised in prayer, she invites us, her children, to behold her Son, Jesus Christ. She invites us also to welcome Him into the center of our own being.



Scott Hay, Iconographer