

Mary, Star of Evangelization

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Looking on the icon of Mary, Star of Evangelization, we see three dominate images Mary, the Star of Bethlehem and the almond shaped background. As one contemplates the icon consider the image from three hills or three levels:

The image is rooted in scripture. In the Gospel of St. Luke, Mary, pregnant with Our Lord “rises and goes to the hill country” (Luke 1:39) to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth. ***This is the first evangelization journey.*** Mary brings the Word of God, flesh incarnate, to her cousin. Elizabeth is pregnant with John the Baptist, the one who goes before him.

Mary comes to the new world as ***Our Lady of Guadalupe*** and appears on the hill at Tepejac to St. Juan Diego, a member of the indigenous people. ***This appearance is truly a sign of evangelization in the Americas.*** It was one of the most incredible conversions in the church. The conversion of the whole country of Mexico began after her apparition in 1531.

Mary, daughter of Zion - out of Zion will come forth blessing and refreshment. God’s Word will come from the hill of Zion. ***We are evangelized through the Word so we in turn can evangelize.*** St. Juan Diego, a member of the indigenous people. ***This appearance is truly a sign of evangelization in the Americas.*** It was one of the most incredible conversions in the church.

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Mary

The Stance – Mary stands with her hands in the position of prayer.

The Veil - Traditionally icons clothe Mary in a mulberry, dark red outer garment. That color is not used here, nor is she wearing dark blue. Instead Mary’s garment is a turquoise green. God chose this garment color when He made her appear on the cloak of Guadalupe. In iconography turquoise green is the color of the Holy Spirit, so Mary is veiled in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the principle agent of evangelization.

The Robe - The garment underneath is sort of rose in color, not necessarily red. Icon writers to identify God the Father use the rose color. So Mary also puts on the color of God the Father.

“Mandola” or Almond Shape

This symbolizes the rending of two realities - the spiritual and the corporal- and opens up the heavenly realm. It literally is pulling apart. The background is dark because it represents the uncreated light and the spiritual light that is in the invisible world. The spiritual light is so bright that it is not really perceivable to our eyes – to us it would be darkness. Through Mary’s intercession the uncreated light is becoming visible to our eyes. The blues get lighter.

The Greek letters to the left and right of Mary’s halo proclaim the title used in all traditional Marian icons - Mary, God bearing or Mother of God (*Theotocus*).

Icon Originally Commissioned by The Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon