



Catechist Connection



The Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos - October 1

This Feast Day is also known as Pokrov or Protection of the Theotokos. This is a feast that historically took place in the beginning of the 10th Century. St. Andrew, the Fool and his companion Epiphany, were in a Church in Constantinople with hundreds of people. The enemy was at the edge of the city and ready to attack. The people prayed to the Mother of God for protection. St. Andrew, the Fool and Epiphany saw a vision of the Mother of God. She went to the Altar, knelt in prayer and then turned to the people. She took her veil and spread it over them as a sign of protection. St. Andrew, the Fool and Epiphany took this to mean that the city would be saved.¹ At the very moment, the enemy turned around and left. We celebrate this Feast day to remember the Mother of God's faithful presence in our lives and the life of the Church.

In your Classroom you can put an Icon of Mary in the Icon Corner. You may Google images for "Protection of the Theotokos" if you want an Icon for the Feast In the icon of this feast, that's what you will see. If you see an icon of the Protection of the Theotokos or the Protecting Veil, there will be this huge assembly of the saints—all of the saints: prophets, apostles, martyrs, bishops, monastics—with Mary, Christ's mother, in the center, and they're interceding for the Church on earth. In the icon of the Protection, because it was the day of St. Romanos the Hymnographer, he will be pictured also in the church—although it's not historically accurate; it's anachronistic; he lived a couple hundred years earlier—but he's put in the middle of the church in the position of the ambon where the deacon would be praying and singing the hymns of the Church, so there's a connection of this singing and praying within the church with the communion of all of the saints who are glorified with Christ and who were faithful to him on earth.

What the end result is, so to speak, is that this is a great festival of the fact that the heavenly Church, the assembly of all the saints, led by Christ's mother, Mary, are constantly present, interceding for us, praying with us, connected to us, and that when we go to church and when we celebrate the liturgical offices of the Church and constitute the Church on earth, gathered by God himself and Christ himself, by the power of the Holy Spirit, then we enter into this glorification of the angels. Of course, the angels are on the icon, too, with all of the holy people.

¹ Katrij, Julian. A Byzantine Rite Liturgical Year. New York: Basilian Fathers Publications, 1983. Pp. 226 –

We are in communion with them, they are in communion with us, and together we constitute the Ekklesia, the great Assembly, and the Church of the New Covenant. ²

Have a Blessed Day celebrating the Protection of the Theotokos. Know that she is always there to lead you and the children you teach to Christ.

Below is a simple line drawing of the Icon of Protection of the Theotokos. This is one of the few icons in our Church that the Theotokos appears without Christ. This icon has the same characteristics of all Icons of the Theotokos – the three stars of virginity (on her shoulders and forehead) proclaiming her virginity before, during and after Christ's birth; the inscription of Maria Theotokos in the circles around her head proclaiming Mary, Mother of God; the veil, and in this icon the mantle of protection.

Blessings,

Sr. Bonnie

