

Praying with an Icon – Mary, Star of the Sea



An icon is a “window to the divine”. In praying with an icon, we allow God to speak to us through the image.

In this image of Mary, we notice:

- Mary placed over a very rough sea
- A boat being guided by a ray of light from a lighthouse
- The Southern Cross

What do your eyes see?

What does your heart see?

How is God speaking to you in love through this icon?

There is no “right” way to pray with and no “correct” way to interpret an icon, yet a beginner may appreciate some initial guidance. So, if this is your first time praying with an icon, here are some suggestions:

1. Pull up a chair or find a pew near the icon and plan to spend at least 5 minutes there, but be open to a longer period of time.
2. Sit comfortably with your back straight, head over your shoulders, and hands placed open on your lap.
3. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you during your prayer time.
5. Open your eyes – and your heart – and gaze softly at the icon, perhaps starting with the eyes of one of the persons depicted.
6. From there, allow your eyes and your heart to wander anywhere they are led within the icon.
7. If you like, notice colours, shapes and lines.
8. Consider what captures your attention and wonder in your heart why that might be.
9. End your prayer time by thanking God for your time together.

From: Praying with Icons Reflection Guide, St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, West Des Moines, Iowa
https://saintfrancischurch.org/app/uploads/2019/09/praying_with_icons_guide.pdf