

History of the Wonder-working Sitka icon of the Mother of God

The Sitka Icon of the Mother of God Located at the Cathedral of St Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska is one of the most revered Icons in North America: the Sitka Mother of God.

This Icon has been attributed to a famous Iconographer, Vladimir Lukich Borovikovsky (1758-1826), a protégé of the Empress Catherine II who was instructed at the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, Russia. In addition to being a great portrait painter, Borovikovsky also painted many of the Icons for the Cathedral of the Kazan Icon in St Petersburg.

Painted in the style of the Kazan Mother of God Icon, on canvas, the Sitka Mother of God Icon is 36 x 17½ inches in size. An exceptionally beautiful and detailed riza of silver covers the Icon of the Theotokos and Christ child, and the Image of God the Father blessing from above.

The Cathedral received the Icon as a gift from the laborers of the Russian American Company in 1850, two years after the Cathedral was completed. Even with their meager wages, these men generously made their contribution to the Church.

Miracles have been attributed to the Sitka Mother of God Icon over the years. It is believed that the gaze of the eyes of the Theotokos have led to the restored health of those who prayed before the Icon.

Because of the peaceful gaze of the Theotokos, the Icon has been described as a “pearl of Russian ecclesiastical art of ineffable gentleness, purity and harmony....” And “...the most beautiful face of the Mother of God with the Divine Child in her arms is so delicately and artistically done that the more one looks at it the more difficult it is to tear one’s gaze away.”

Originally part of the main Iconostasis at the Cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska, the Icon is now permanently located on the far left side of the Iconostasis in a special place of honor.

