

Veronika Nela Gašpar

Mater misericordiae

Among many definitions of the twentieth century, the most terrible and apparent one is that which defines it as "the bloodiest century in history". It suffices to think of the millions killed in wars. Against this senseless culture portrayed with death and the human need for tenderness, man turns his thoughts to Mother of Mercy who reveals the compassionate and maternal face of God. Everything in his life was shaped by the presence of the divine mercy. Chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, Mary was always prepared by the love of the Father to be the Ark of the Covenant between God and men. She kept in her heart the divine mercy in perfect harmony with her Son, Jesus. Mary certifies that the mercy of the Son of God does not know borders and reaches all without excluding anyone.

In Eastern Christianity icons are considered correspondent with the Bible and tradition. The icons of the Madonna have their place in the so-called dogmatic cycle of iconography and present to the faithful, in different ways and in symbolic language, the Marian doctrine. The icon of *Eleúsa* stands for "tender and merciful" and emphasizes the love that binds mother and son extolling the humanity of Christ.