



MARIANNA

Sacred Beauty for a Cause is a fundraising initiative of Ivan Franko Homes created in partnership with iconographer Mariana Savaryn.

This initiative aims to support the new Centre for Aging and Longevity project.



Ivan Franko Homes is delighted to share A Year in Icons, a special series presented in partnership with Ukrainian-Canadian iconographer Marianna Savaryn.

The series follows our Sacred Beauty for a Cause event, where Marianna's collection of 35 original icons was presented to friends, supporters, and members of the community.

The event also featured a screening of the mini-documentary Written in Prayer, offering guests an opportunity to learn more about Marianna's artistic practice, the spiritual significance of iconography, and the vision behind bringing this collection to the new IFH Campus of Care.

As part of this initiative, Marianna is generously donating her icons to the permanent collection at the Campus of Care. Rooted in faith, prayer, tradition, and the enduring beauty of Christian iconography, these sacred works will offer inspiration, spiritual comfort, and cultural connection to residents, families, staff, and visitors for generations to come.

Many of the icons have already been generously sponsored, while opportunities remain to adopt an available icon and create a lasting legacy within the IFH community. Throughout the coming year, we will introduce each icon individually, exploring the figures it represents, the symbolism within its composition, and the stories connected to its place at Ivan Franko Homes.

We invite you to follow along as we celebrate the beauty of these extraordinary works and discover how art, faith, and community can become an enduring act of generosity. To learn more about available icons and sponsorship opportunities, please contact IFH.

SEPTEMBER 1 – 7 | WEEK 1

TRINITY

Hospitality of Abraham



THIS ICON HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY
SPONSORED BY
W. Gregory and Larissa Ciupka

The Story Behind the Icon

This sacred icon portrays the three mysterious visitors welcomed by Abraham in Genesis 18, traditionally understood in Orthodox Christianity as the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Seated around a table, the three angelic figures incline gently toward one another, their serene expressions, graceful gestures, and flowing garments creating the impression of a quiet, eternal conversation. No figure dominates; instead, each appears to give and receive, forming a harmonious circle that speaks of unity, equality, communion, and self-giving love. The arrangement draws the viewer into the scene, while the open space at the table suggests an invitation to enter this circle of divine fellowship. What do we see when we look at an icon? At first, perhaps, three angels seated around a table. Three figures, quietly turned toward one another. But stay a little longer. There is no beginning and no end to their conversation.

Each seems to receive the other, and in that mysterious circle there is room for us. This is the Trinity — not an idea to be explained, but a mystery to be entered. This icon of the Trinity invites us to contemplate a love that is neither possessive nor closed, but always giving, always receiving, always making room. Perhaps that is why the table matters. There is an empty space. A place waiting for us.

At the centre of the table rests a cup, symbolizing the Eucharist, sacrifice, and God's boundless love for humanity. Behind the figures, the house represents God's dwelling and creation, the tree recalls the Tree of Life and the Cross, and the mountain rises as a symbol of prayer, contemplation, and spiritual ascent. The luminous gold background carries the scene beyond ordinary time, signifying heaven, eternity, and divine light. Every detail contributes to the icon's spiritual meaning, guiding the eye from the gentle meeting of the figures to the sacred symbols surrounding them. Through its balance, stillness, and quiet radiance, the icon becomes more than an image to admire—it becomes a threshold into prayer, inviting us to pause, reflect, and remain for a while in the presence of divine beauty and love.

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SEPTEMBER 8 - 14 | WEEK 2

ZARVANYTSIA

Mother of God



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The Stasiw Family

The Story Behind the Icon

Last week we began our journey through *A Year in Icons* with an image from the theme of the angels. This week, we turn our attention to the Mother of God, whose presence in sacred art speaks so profoundly of tenderness, compassion, protection, and hope. Through her, we encounter a sacred figure who is not distant from human suffering, but deeply connected to the experiences of those who are weary, wounded, displaced, and searching for consolation. *The Mother of God of Zarvanytsia* is a miraculous icon, deeply revered within the Ukrainian Catholic traditions. She gazes outward with a tenderness that seems to hold the sorrow of centuries while remaining a source of quiet strength.

Her image carries the memory of invasion, destruction, persecution, and loss, yet it also speaks of enduring faith and renewal. Zarvanytsia is regarded as the spiritual heart of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and for centuries pilgrims have travelled there seeking healing, consolation, and strength. At Ivan Franko Homes, this icon resonates deeply as a reminder of Ukraine's enduring faith, culture, and heritage, especially during a time when the country is once again experiencing profound suffering. Marianna's connection to the region through a maternal grandmother adds a personal dimension to the work, while the Swarovski crystals, woven braid, and handcrafted frame—inspired by William Kurelek—reflect the importance of tradition, memory, and craftsmanship. Above all, the Mother of God remains a compassionate presence for the weary, wounded, and displaced.

Though the shrine has been destroyed and rebuilt, and faith has been driven underground and risen again, the Mother has remained constant. In her arms is Christ—the source of healing, hope, and life—and through this icon, we are reminded to honour our roots, support one another, and carry hope forward together.

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SEPTEMBER 15 - 21 | WEEK 3

ST. LUKE



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Bernard and Marianna Masnyk

The Story Behind the Icon

This week, we continue our journey through A Year in Icons by turning our attention to the first saint in the collection: Saint Luke. Remembered as an evangelist, a companion of Saint Paul, and a physician, Luke was deeply attentive to the whole human person—body, mind, and spirit. His Gospel is filled with tender encounters with people who are seen, welcomed, healed, and restored. The forgotten are remembered, the suffering are not overlooked, and those longing for healing are met with compassion. He writes with particular tenderness toward the poor and with profound respect for women. Tradition also remembers Saint Luke as the first iconographer. It is said that he lived during the time of the Mother of God and that she posed for him as he painted her image.

This sacred encounter is associated with the icon known as the Hodegetria, a Greek word meaning “She Who Shows the Way.” In this image, the Mother of God presents Christ as the source of life and gently directs our hearts toward Him. Perhaps this is why the icon of Saint Luke feels so compelling. He was not only a physician who cared for the human body, but also an artist who recognized the sacred beauty present within the visible world. Through his hands, the act of painting became a form of witness—an invitation to see more deeply and to encounter the holy within the human face.

An icon is not simply an image to be observed. It is a window through which we are invited into relationship with the person depicted. In the icon of Saint Luke, we encounter a man whose life was shaped by healing, compassion, and attentive love. His Gospel reminds us that no suffering is invisible and no person is forgotten.

It is fitting that the saint remembered as a physician would also become associated with the healing presence of sacred images. Through his words and through the tradition of iconography, Saint Luke continues to guide us toward a vision of beauty that does not deny human suffering, but meets it with tenderness, dignity, and hope.

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ORANTA TRIPTYCH

Protection Theme



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The Story Behind the Icon

This week, we continue our journey through A Year in Icons by turning our attention to the Oranta and the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. At the centre of this sacred triptych stands the Mother of God in the ancient Oranta posture, with her hands raised in prayer. Above her, Christ appears within a mandorla, blessing and making present the mystery of the Word made flesh. Surrounding the Mother of God are two six-winged seraphim. Their many wings create a sense of movement and mystery, suggesting the presence of heaven gathered around her. At her sides stand the Archangels

Michael and Gabriel, messengers, guardians, and servants of the divine mystery. Together, these heavenly figures draw the viewer into a scene of prayer, protection, and trust. The Oranta does not ask viewers to understand everything at once. Instead, she invites them to stand still, rest their gaze, and become attentive to the presence of God. Her raised hands express a trust deeper than words—a turning of the whole self toward God and an offering of the world into divine care. The angels beside her remind us that heaven is not distant or silent, but surrounds human life in ways that are often unseen. An icon is not simply an image to be observed. It is a window through which viewers are invited into relationship with the person depicted and the mystery represented. In the Oranta, the Mother of God becomes a figure of intercession: a mother who holds the world in prayer and gently invites others to do the same. This meaning resonates deeply with the work of Ivan Franko Homes, where senior care is rooted in dignity, compassion, and the recognition of each resident's whole person—body, mind, spirit, memory, and relationships. Within a community of care, prayer can become another way of holding one another: remembering residents, families, caregivers, and loved ones with tenderness and hope. The Oranta offers a gesture of trust, a gesture of intercession, and a gesture of hope. She encourages viewers to carry those they love in their hearts and to entrust them into God's hands. Like a little window into heaven, the icon offers a place of peace—an invitation to become still enough to see that no person is forgotten and that love continues to surround us.

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SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 5 | WEEK 5

GREAT TAXIARCH ARCHANGEL MICHAEL



The Story Behind the Icon

This week, as we continue our journey through A Year in Icons, we turn our attention to the Great Taxiarch, Archangel Michael, whose feast is celebrated on September 29, the Feast of the Holy Archangels. Last week, we encountered Michael standing beside the Mother of God in the Oranta, together with Gabriel, as a heavenly witness to the mystery of the Incarnation. This week, we contemplate him more fully as the leader and commander of the heavenly hosts. In the icon, Archangel Michael holds a sceptre in his right hand and a transparent crystal globe in his left. These symbols speak of his authority, but not an authority rooted in earthly power.

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY
Ihor Rudensky and Myrosia Kostiw

Michael's strength is the strength of faithful service: complete obedience to God and a readiness to protect all that has been entrusted to him. The title *Taxiarch* means commander or leader of a heavenly host. Michael is portrayed as a guardian, protector, and spiritual warrior. Yet his presence is not threatening. Instead, there is something deeply comforting in the way he watches over the world, reminding us that the heavenly realm is not distant from human life, but near to us in ways that are often unseen. Like all angels, Michael points beyond himself toward God, whose glory he serves. His beauty is not his own possession, but a reflected beauty—received from God and offered back in praise. Perhaps this is one of the icon's quiet lessons: we, too, are called to become vessels of a beauty that is not our own—to stand faithfully where we have been placed, protect what has been entrusted to us, carry light into places of darkness, and let our lives point beyond ourselves. This calling resonates deeply with the work of Ivan Franko Homes, where care is rooted in dignity, compassion, and the recognition of each resident's whole person—body, mind, spirit, memory, and relationships. Within a community of care, protection can take many forms: a gentle presence, a listening ear, a comforting gesture, or the faithful accompaniment of another through times of uncertainty. In these quiet acts of service, the spirit of the heavenly hosts becomes present in human life. May Archangel Michael accompany and protect us, surround our communities with peace, and lead us ever closer to the mystery and beauty of God.

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OCTOBER 6 - 12 | WEEK 6

SAINTS HELEN & CONSTANTINE



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The Story Behind the Icon

This week, as we continue our journey through A Year in Icons, we turn our attention to Saints Helen and Constantine. On September 14, the Church celebrates the Exaltation of the Holy Cross—a feast that invites us to look beyond the Cross as an object and contemplate it as the sign of Christ’s love, sacrifice, and victory.

Saint Helen, the mother of Constantine, is traditionally remembered for her pilgrimage to Jerusalem and her search for the True Cross. Constantine, the first Roman emperor to openly embrace Christianity, is remembered for bringing the faith from the margins into the public life of the Empire. Together, they stand before us in stillness.

Their faces are turned toward us, their bearing dignified, their gestures restrained. Notice their richly ornamented garments, especially the outer robes, which feature a traditional Byzantine double-headed eagle pattern. Even their clothing becomes part of the icon’s visual language, recalling Constantine’s imperial identity. The image opens a window into another reality, where the earthly and heavenly are held together.

At the heart of the icon is the Cross. Perhaps this is one of the great mysteries these saints invite us to contemplate: what appears to be an ending can become the beginning of new life.

Saints Helen and Constantine remind us that faith is not only something we inherit from the past. It is something we are continually invited to discover, carry, and make visible in our own lives. As I painted this icon, I found myself returning again and again to the Cross at its centre—quietly held, yet speaking more deeply than words.

May this image be, for each of us, a little window into that mystery.

Saints Helen and Constantine, pray for us.

This icon is available for sponsorship. If you would like to consider becoming a sponsor, please open the link below.

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OCTOBER 13 - 19 | WEEK 7

SAINT ROMAN

the Melodist



The Story Behind the Icon

This week, as we continue our journey through A Year in Icons, we turn our attention to Saint Roman the Melodist. On October 1, the Byzantine Church commemorates this great hymnographer of the early Church and patron of sacred song.

Roman lived in Constantinople in the sixth century, where he served as a deacon. Tradition tells us that he struggled with reading and singing, and was deeply saddened by criticism. One night, as he prayed before an icon of the Mother of God, she appeared to him in a vision and gave him a scroll. The next day, he unexpectedly sang his first sacred hymn.

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY
Daria Diakowska

Nearly 1,000 sacred hymns are attributed to Saint Roman. His story reminds us that a gift may not appear in the way we expect—and that what seems like a weakness can, through grace, become an instrument of beauty. There is a particular beauty in the connection between iconography and hymnography. The icon speaks through colour, form, gesture, and light. The hymn speaks through melody, poetry, and prayer. Both invite us beyond what we can immediately see and offer a glimpse into the mystery of God. Saint Roman reminds us that sacred art is ultimately not about the artist. It is about allowing the gifts we have received to become prayer.

May his intercession inspire us to offer whatever gifts we have, however imperfectly, so that they may become a song of praise.

Saint Roman the Melodist, pray for us.

This featured icon has been generously sponsored by Daria Diakowsky. We are deeply grateful for this support of Sacred Beauty for a Cause and Ivan Franko Homes.

As we continue this weekly series, you will also have the opportunity to discover and sponsor one of the remaining icons in the collection.

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Ivan
Franko
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CREATED AND DONATED BY MARIANNA SAVARYN

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