

## The Icon: A Space for Presence

“The icon is a link between the human and the divine. It provides a space for the mystical encounter between the person before it and God. It becomes a place for an appearance of Christ, the *Theotokos* or the Saints—provided one stands before the icon with right disposition of heart and mind. It creates a place of prayer. An icon participates in the event it depicts and is almost a re-creation of that event existentially for the believer . . . They (icons) provide joy since icons remind us that we are deeply loved by God.” Paul Boyce—*Byzantine Iconography—A Brief Overview*. (<http://www.csg-i.com/icons/html/overview.htm>.)

The icon of Jean-Claude Colin, gives the one before it an entrée into the relationship between the Founder and Mary and her Son. With Jean-Claude we put ourselves in Mary’s presence, and with her in the presence of her Son. With the right disposition we can become sharers in that loving gaze, receiving the inspiration and companionship of Jean-Claude in his life of listening-obedience to the Word, spoken anew.

## Prayer for the Beatification of Jean-Claude Colin

God our Father,  
in your servant Jean-Claude Colin  
you gave your people a zealous priest  
and religious founder  
dedicated to serving the Church  
in the spirit of Mary.

We ask you for the glorification of your  
faithful servant  
in the midst of your Church  
and to grant us those favours which we ask  
through his intercession:  
This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*With ecclesiastical approval*

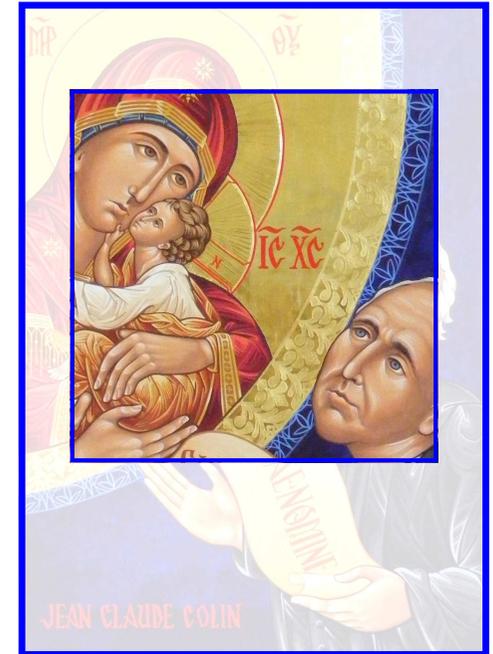
*If you receive any grace through the intercession  
of Venerable Jean-Claude Colin please communi-  
cate the information to:*

*Fr Carlo-Maria Schianchi SM,  
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00152 Rome, Italy  
Email: [postulator@maristsm.org](mailto:postulator@maristsm.org)*

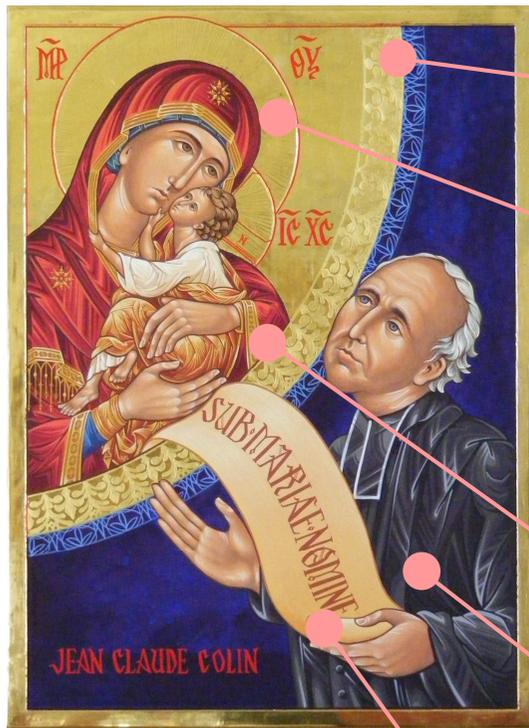
The icon was designed and written by the  
Studio of John the Baptist, Auckland, New  
Zealand ([www.sacredart.co.nz](http://www.sacredart.co.nz)).

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## THE SOCIETY OF MARY



## Icon of Jean-Claude Colin, Founder



Through an icon we are able to encounter the person portrayed. In this icon we are brought into the presence of three persons: the Word Made Flesh, his Mother Mary and Jean-Claude Colin, Founder of the Society of Mary.

In this icon the central life-event of Jean-Claude is represented — his relationship with Mary and her Divine Son. It speaks particularly of the inspiration that was given Jean-Claude throughout his life of listening-obedience, an inspiration which remained always his guide as founder, leader and writer of a rule.



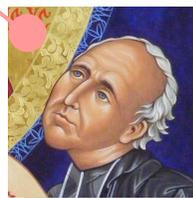
- The icon is in two parts: the golden realm of glory, the place of the Lord and his Mother, and the blue realm of the life and world of Jean-Claude.
- Not yet been declared a saint by the Church, Jean-Claude is represented standing outside the glory, though his face is lit by it.
- The intersection of the two worlds expresses two significant areas of the life of Jean-Claude, in which the divine will was made known to him and he responded—France, symbolized by the gold fleur-de-lis and Oceania, symbolized in the blue Oceanian design.



- The Mother of God is represented in the traditional manner of the Eastern Church. Here she is portrayed as Mother of God, *Eleousa* (the Merciful One) or Our Lady of Tenderness, reflecting that characteristic of Mary so dear to Jean-Claude - Mother of Mercy.
- The red of Mary's veil signifies both her suffering and her holiness; the blue of her undergarment indicates her humanity.
- The three stars mark her virginity and also refer to the indwelling Blessed Trinity—the second star is covered by the figure of Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity.



- While Mary receives the tender signs of affection from her Son, she looks towards Jean-Claude, with her own gaze of affection.
- He returns the loving gaze, his head raised in imitation of Jesus—his relationship with her is the image of Jesus's relationship with his Mother.
- Positioned between Mary and Jean-Claude, thus central to their relationship, is Christ.
- Jean-Claude's head is tilted in an attitude of listening. "I shall do nothing without her, I shall give no instruction without consulting her. I shall say, 'Blessed Virgin, help me. You are my mother, my superior'."



- The iconographer has attempted to paint Jean-Claude Colin with features that can be recognized from the few photographs we have of him in his old age, while, at the same time, signifying that he now enjoys the youthfulness of eternal life.
- His earthly life, in particular his priesthood, is expressed in his wearing the clerical dress of his time.
- His white hair signifies the wisdom of the founder, of the superior general and of the writer of the Marist Constitutions.



- The scroll which forms a link with the two realms of heaven and earth carries the Latin motto of the Society of Mary: *Sub Mariæ Nomine* (Under the Name of Mary). Jean-Claude believed that in the Divine Providence the name of Mary had been kept for his little Society.
- The scroll represents the inspiration for the Society of Mary, its purpose and its spirit, coming from Mary, herself. Hand gestures reflect this: from Mary's hand comes the inspiring words, while Jean-Claude receives them with one hand and with the other points to her who is their source.