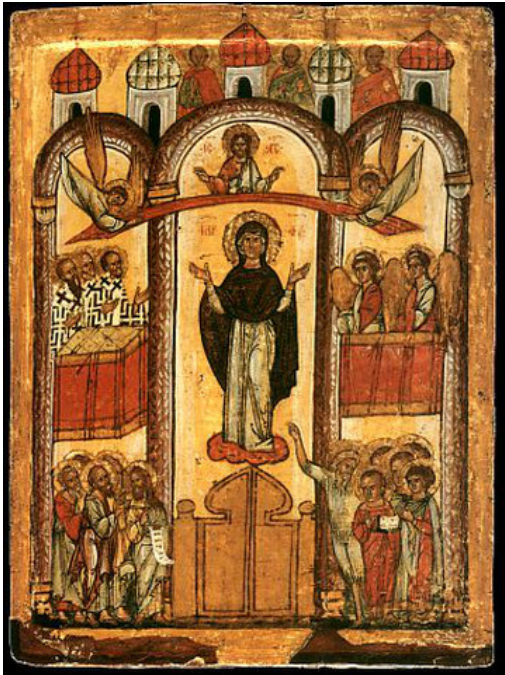


The Story of Pokrov

On Sunday, October 1, in the year 911, the Christian people of Constantinople were afraid. Pagan terrorists from a far away nation had threatened to invade and destroy the Christian city. Feeling that almost all hope was lost, Christians gathered in the Blachernae Church of the Mother of God, where relics of clothing once



worn by the Theotokos such as her robe, her veil, and part of her belt were kept for veneration. They had planned an all-night vigil to beg God to protect them.

There was a man there known as St. Andrew, the Blessed Fool for Christ, due to his tendency to go to extremes in his devotion to Our Lord. He was said to have been of Slavic origin but was living in Constantinople because he had been taken captive and became the slave of a man who was a bodyguard in the city. At about 4 o'clock in the morning, Andrew looked up to see the dome of the church seemingly disappear and a shining figure of the Theotokos, surrounded by the angels and saints such as John the Baptist, John the Theologian and Nicholas of Myra, descend from heaven toward the altar, where she knelt in prayer. She appeared to beg God tearfully on behalf of the citizens of Constantinople, asking her Divine Son to hear

the prayers of all those who prayed for protection and begged her intercession.

When she finished her prayers, Andrew saw her remove her veil, and spread it over all the people in the church as a protection. He turned to his friend, a disciple of his named Epiphanius who later became a saint, and asked him if he saw the wondrous sight. St. Epiphanius replied that he saw Our Lady indeed, and was amazed. As long as Our Lady remained in the church, many were able to see her and the veil she extended over them. When she left their presence, a peaceful calm remained and when morning came, it was clear that the enemy had retreated, and that they would be safe.

Every year on October 1st, to this very day, we commemorate this great miracle and thank God for the wonderful gift of the Mother of God and all the prayerful protection and intercession that she provides for us. You must remember to thank God for her too, and to thank her in prayer for all she does for us! You can do this by going to Liturgy on the feast, by standing up for others who are persecuted for their faith, and by establishing a strong relationship with her by talking to her every day in prayer! Jesus loves His mother very much, and He wants us to love her too!