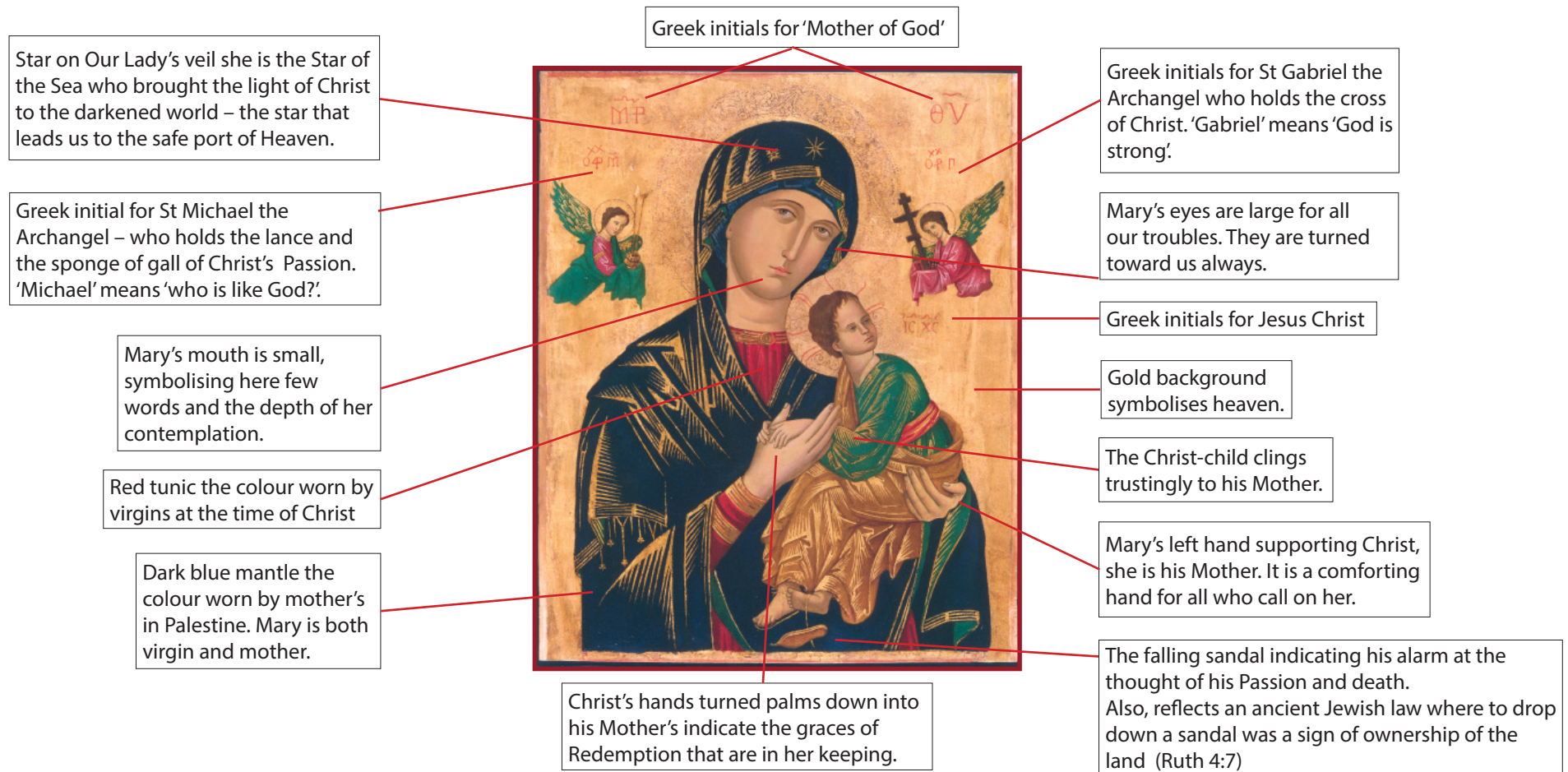


Our Lady of Perpetual Help – the story...

An 'icon' is a Christian picture which tells a story or teaches a truth. Traditionally, icons have been associated with the Eastern Church, but have played a part in the Western Church also. The icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is an icon which tells of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ and of the suffering of Mary, his mother.



The original picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was painted on the island of Crete nearly six hundred years ago. The picture was stolen by a merchant in 1498 and brought by him from Crete to Rome the following year.

It is recorded in the history of the picture that the merchant fell seriously ill, and fearing death, he asked a friend to place the picture in a church where it could be once again seen by the faithful. The merchant died but his friend held on to the picture and it was placed by his wife in their house. After a series of visions of Our Lady, the friend was finally convinced to part with the picture and place it in accordance with Our Lady's request, in the Church of St Matthew in Rome. This church was destroyed in 1798 but the picture was kept safe by the Augustinian Friars. Eventually a new church was built on the site of the destroyed church.

This new church was the Redemptorist church of St Alphonsus, and the Pope requested that the picture be placed in this church near its former home. On April 26th 1866 the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was solemnly installed in this new church. Our Lady of Perpetual Help has become one of the best known and loved icons of the world and devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help has spread throughout the world both through Novenas and private prayer.