

This week in our study of the meaning of color in our icons we look at the color **BLUE**. «Unquestionably, blue is the deepest, the most immaterial of all the colors—also the coolest. It offers a transparency proven by the limpidity [perfect clearness] of water, air and crystal, so that our gaze disappears into its depths. Color of the heavens *par excellence*, blue is consequently predominant in medieval stained-glass; it reduces somewhat the material quality of the forms that it surrounds. It is passive on the material level because of its weak radiance; but it becomes eminently active on the spiritual level, oriented as it is towards the transcendent, and guides our spirit on the path of faith of which it is the chromatic [color] symbol. Blue also possesses a characteristic of interiorization and discretion, which suggests silent humility. Darker tones of blue accentuate its interior action as well as its attraction towards the infinite. If painted lighter, it seems to become distant and indifferent. We should note the fact that the contrast of a color tone with one or more different colors changes its chromatic value. The above-mentioned transparency of blue makes it a natural ally of white. It was once a symbol of immortality among the Chinese and of truth for the Egyptians, whose high priest wore a blue sapphire and officiated in blue vestments, so we can deduce its link with the divine.

The encounter between heaven and earth puts the **celestial colors** of blue and white in opposition to the **terrestrial colors** of red and green. The popular icon of Saint George slaying the dragon gives us a fine example of such chromatic contrasts. In Greek mythology, the father of both men and gods is called Zeus, which means life, ether, the heavens, warmth and fire. His cloak, either an ethereal sky-blue or fire-red, conveys the closeness between wisdom and love in that supreme divinity. Although highly valued in the Orient—above all in fabrics and in the superb Persian and Ottoman ceramics—blue was ignored in the New Testament, and it is rarely mentioned in the Old Testament. Here is mentioned only the blue-purple vestment worn by the High Priest (Ex 28:31) who communicated with God in the Tent of the Covenant, which was woven with a cloth of the same shade (Num 4: 6-12).

Blue and white are attributed to the Virgin Mary, expressing detachment from this world and the soaring of the soul toward God. The icon of the Dormition painted by Theophanes the Greek, which can be contemplated at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, offers a perfect example. The scene of the Dormition in the icon of the Deisis and the Great Feasts is directly inspired from it. [...] Dark blue is a sign of the mystery

of Divine Life and dominates in iconography. It is the color of the mandorla centers in icons of the Transfiguration and of Christ in Glory. Blue is most often the color of the vestment of the Pantocrator, the robe of the Virgin and of the Apostles, not to mention the blues seen in Rublev's icon of the Trinity.»

Taken from *The Icon Window on the Kingdom* by Michel Quenot.
Translated by a Carthusian Monk. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. 1991. pp. 113 – 114.



«The fans hurt my neck! Don't you believe in air conditioning! Can't you turn the heat up? It's too hot in here. Why are the windows open? Why aren't the windows open?» and the list could go on *ad nauseam!!!*

Question: "What does the Bible say about complaining?"

Answer: The Greek word translated “**complainer**” means literally “**one who is discontented with his lot in life.**” It is akin to the word **grumbler**. Complaining is certainly not a fruit of the Spirit and, in fact, is detrimental to the peace, joy, and patience that come from the Spirit. **For the Christian, complaining is a destructive and debilitating personally and only serves to make our witness to the world more difficult. Who, for instance, would be attracted to a religion whose adherents are dissatisfied with life and who continually grumble and complain?**



The first complainer was Adam who, after he and Eve disobeyed, complained to God that “the woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it”. [...] Clearly, as believers we are challenged not to grumble or complain; rather, we are to love one another deeply so that we may become “blameless and pure” in God's eyes. **If we grumble and complain, it shows how worldly we still are.** A complaining spirit leads to fighting and quarrelling because **complaints come from unfulfilled desires**, which lead to envy and strife. Was that not at the root of the problem with the sons of Jacob, when they chose to dispose of their brother Joseph, because of his dream? But note that they spoke against God's servant and, in doing so, spoke against God Himself. **If we must complain, let it be to Him about our own sinfulness so that He will forgive and cleanse us and put within us a new heart, one that rejoices rather than complains.**