

The Icon of Our Lady of Zarvanytsia is very special to Ukrainian people. Zarvanytsia is a small village located in the center of the Podilia Valley in Ukraine. It is located near the Strypa River, and is surrounded by low mountains on the other three sides. The town received its name in 1240, while the Tartar-Mongols were invading Ukraine. During this time, a monk of the Kiev Caves Lavra escaped to western Ukraine into the area that is now Zarvanytsia. Weakened from hunger and from wounds, he prayed fervently for his fallen country begging protection of the Mother of God and he fell asleep. In a vision, the Mother of God appeared to him with her cloak. Suddenly, a bright light awoke him, and he rose quickly (In Ukrainian, Zarvivsia, from which the word Zarvanytsia is derived.) The bright light that awoke him was the Mother of God. Upon looking out at the valley, he saw an unknown miracle. The fog was silvery as it spread through the valley changing to many different colors of the rainbow, and in the center were light rays. He came to a fountain where the light rays were focused. At the fountain, he saw the reflection of the Mother of God holding Jesus above the water in the rays of light, the Icon. Overcome with pain from his wounds, the monk fell to his knees at the sight and prayed fervently. At the same time, he washed his wounds in the water, and could feel the strength return to his body.



To honor the Mother of God for this miracle, he built a shrine for the Icon at the site. News of the miracle spread, and many came in pilgrimage to the site to be healed in the waters of the fountain, and to pray fervently for the Protection of the Mother of God. Even history books tell of Prince Vasylko of Terebovlanski who came to Zarvanytsia to live and was healed of a long illness. He built a church and called it White Stone.

In 1867, Father Madickeoski crowned the Icon of our Lady with the golden cover that appears around her. It was taken from the shrine to the White Stone Church. At the same time, Pope Pius IX sent an ox-drawn cart from Rome to Zarvanytsia carrying a wooden pulpit to be used in the church. He declared this an official pilgrimage site.

When serfdom ended, the Jewish people bought Zarvanytsia. At the time of Austrian Rule, Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky bought the land where Zarvanytsia is from the Jewish people. Finally, the church was truly in the hands of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

Patriarch Joseph Slypyj called the Icon a miraculous Icon because of the many miracles that are attributed to our Lady through the Icon. He recreated and sent copies of it to his faithful throughout the world when he was released from Siberia and arrived in Rome. Patriarch Lubachivsky wrote: "Let us honor the Mother of God of Zarvanytsia, in the same manner as the French honor Lourdes and the Portuguese honor Fatima and the Polish honor an Icon that originated in Ukraine and now is known as the Mother of God of Czestochowa."