



Virgin of the Maori - Indigenous of New Zealand

The Virgin of the Maori was painted by Sr. Julia Lynch, RSM, a Sister of Mercy living in New Zealand. The Maori are a group of indigenous Australians who give the name “tangiwai” to a nearly transparent greenstone. Tangiwai means, "tear-water," and Maori legend says that this kind of stone was formed from the tears of a lamenting woman. In this image, Sr. Julia is portraying the lamenting woman as Mary, who is shedding a green tear as she holds her Son. In the temple, Simeon predicted that a sword would pierce Mary's heart (Luke 2:35), describing the anguish that Jesus' Passion would cause His mother. The Virgin of Maori reminds us that sometimes God asks us to do difficult things, but the suffering does have value and can contribute to the salvation of the world.