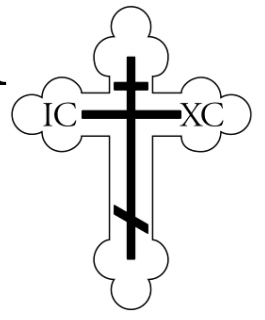
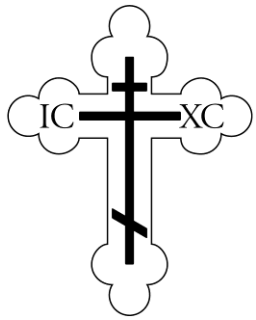


# Protection of the Virgin Mary

## Orthodox Church



A Parish of the  
Diocese of Chicago  
and the Midwest  
Orthodox Church  
in America



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Merrillville, IN 46410  
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Rev. Dr. Jacob Van Sickle  
(219)384-6826 • [frjacobvansickle@gmail.com](mailto:frjacobvansickle@gmail.com)

Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays  
Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays

Confession is available before or  
after Vespers or by appointment.

# November 22, 2020

## Afterfeast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

### Holy Apostles Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and Onesimus of the Seventy

According to Holy Tradition, the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple took place in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Saints Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached the age of three, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. They gathered together their

relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the All-Pure Virgin in Her finest clothes. Singing sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15). There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. In the Temple, fifteen high steps led to the sanctuary, which only the priests and High Priest could enter. (Because they recited a Psalm on each step, Psalms 119/120-133/134 are called “Psalms of Ascent.”) The child Mary, so it seemed, could not make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly went up the remaining steps and ascended to the highest one. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year to offer a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore, all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

After entrusting their child to the Heavenly Father, Joachim and Anna returned home. The All-Holy Virgin remained in the quarters for virgins near the Temple. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Luke 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters around the Temple, in which those who were dedicated to the service of God dwelt.

The earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos from Her infancy until She was taken up to Heaven is shrouded in deep mystery. Her life at the Jerusalem Temple was also a secret. “If anyone were to ask me,” said Saint Jerome, “how the Most Holy Virgin spent the time of Her youth, I would answer that that is known to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel, Her constant guardian.”

## HYMNS OF THE DAY

**Tone 7 – Resurrectional Troparion**

By Your Cross You destroyed death.

To the thief You opened Paradise.

For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.

And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,

to proclaim that You are risen,//

granting the world great mercy.

#### **Tone 4 – Troparion of the Feast**

Today is the prelude of the good will of God,  
of the preaching of the salvation of mankind.  
The Virgin appears in the Temple of God,  
in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all.  
Let us rejoice and sing to her:  
“Rejoice, O Fulfillment//  
of the Creator’s dispensation!”

#### **Tone 3 – Troparion for the Apostles**

Holy Apostles Philemon, Archipus, Apphia, and Onesimus,  
entreat the merciful God//  
to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions!

#### **Tone 7 – Resurrectional Kontakion**

The dominion of death  
can no longer hold men captive,  
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers.  
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry:  
“The Savior has come to those in faith//  
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

#### **Tone 2 – Kontakion for the Apostles**

Let us praise the Apostles of Christ,  
who illumine the ends of the earth like all-radiant stars:  
glorious Philemon and dedicated Archippus,  
Onesimus, together with Mark and Apollos, and the all-wise Apphia.  
Let us cry to them://  
“Unceasingly pray for us all!”

#### **Tone 4 – Kontakion of the Feast**

The most pure Temple of the Savior;  
the precious Chamber and Virgin;  
the sacred Treasure of the glory of God,  
is presented today to the house of the Lord.  
She brings with her the grace of the Spirit,  
therefore, the angels of God praise her://  
“Truly this woman is the abode of Heaven!”

# SCRIPTURE READINGS

## **Tone 7 – Resurrection Prokeimenon (Psalm 28)**

The Lord shall give strength to His people.  
The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

## **Tone 3 – Song of the Theotokos (Luke 1)**

My soul magnifies the Lord, / and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

## **Epistle: Ephesians 2.14-22 (Sunday)**

Brethren: Christ Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

## **Gospel: Luke 12.16-21**

Jesus spoke this parable to His disciples: “The fields of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’

“So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’

“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have prepared?’

“So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

# WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

**N.Dep.** Sue McCune

Met. Theodosius

Gary Tincher

Gene Lukas

**Ev.Mem.** Peter Yaremchuk ('13)

Michael Ivanov ('17)

Margarita Yatsev ('22)

Theodore Krill ('24)

Stephan Petrov ('44)

Peter Elieff ('78)

Mitrofan Shawkun ('87)

## **Health & Salv.**

Archbp. David

Archpr. Peter

Archpr. John

Mat. Margaret

Mat. Anne

Pr. Christopher

Mat. Jennifer

Andrew

Gideon

Kevin

Jon

Tanya

Jovan

Julia

Warren

Tom

Tina

Brittany

Jennifer

Gail

Stacy

Jeramie

Olivia

Parker

Christine

Linda

Larry

Rollie

Joseph

Nadia

Daniel

Brendan

David

Sharon

Michael

Janie

Tanya

Christopher

Nina

Renee

Carissa

Cynthia

John

Vern

Olga

Mark

Jerry

Michael

Janice

Dushawna

Daniel

Anthony

Janet

Daryl

Diane

Carla

Susan

Timothy

William

Paul

Joseph

Linda

Claudia

Tom

Beth

Elizabeth

Snezana

Nathan

Kara

Ryan

Barabara

Thomas

Carol

Christine

Jon

Zoey

Dominic

Declan

Hudson

TaQuana

Gene

Ayden

Hyland

Jason

Ted

Daniel

Tiffany

James

Pamela

Erin

Alexander

Jerome

Ronald

Theodore

Robert

Richard  
Linda  
Mary Ann  
Juli

Lara  
Cheryl  
Craig  
Chuck

Len  
Denise

\*If you know someone who needs prayer, please give their name to Fr Jacob

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We continue to take precautions during the health crisis. Everyone except celebrants and choir must be masked and maintain distance between groups. Those concerned about limiting their exposure to large groups are encouraged to take advantage of weekday Liturgies with lower attendance. The next will be this **Thursday, November 26 for Thanksgiving** at an earlier time: 9am.

This Advent season we are participating in a **Christmas toy drive for foster children**. There is a flyer with more information in the Narthex, as well as a drop-box to leave your gifts.

This is the annual **IOCC Sunday**. Following the Divine Liturgy, we will take a special collection for the work of International Orthodox Christian Charities.

Next Sunday, there will be a special collection will help cover the cost of **Christmas gifts** the Church school children will wrap on **St. Nicholas Day** for local families in need.

Pick-up for the **Thanksgiving Bake Sale** is in the hall today.

Thanks to Elizabeth Wysocki and Irina Jurewicz, who cleaned out the Sunday School rooms this week. There are **tables set up in the hall with many old books and other items free for the taking**. In two weeks, we will take it all to Goodwill.

For **Bible Study** this week, read Revelation 18-19.

Next Sunday we will serve a **panikhida** on the occasion of the **34-year memorial for Archpriest Peter Rozdelsky**.

**Mark your calendars:**

Nov 25: **Bible Study** (on Zoom) @ 7pm

Nov 26: **Thanksgiving Divine Liturgy** @ 9am

**Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$1,322**

# Faith and Works in Ephesians and the Parable of the Good Samaritan

## A Reflection by His Eminence, Our Archbishop Paul

*For by grace, you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God— not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)*

These verses are difficult to understand. On the surface, it seems St. Paul is contradicting Himself. On the one hand he says we have been saved by faith and not because of works. Then he goes on to say that we are “created in Christ Jesus for good works,” and that we should walk in them. So which is it? When St. Paul typically mentions not being saved by works, he usually refers to works of the law such as sacrifices, avoiding certain animals etc. But what does he mean by being in “created in Christ Jesus for good works?”

To answer this question we need to turn to the Parable of the Good Samaritan that we just heard this past Sunday in our churches. It begins with the query of an “expert in the law” who seeks to test Jesus regarding what he must do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus talks about loving one’s neighbor, he asks Him, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus then goes on to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. The question of the lawyer is a minimal and legalistic one: “What do I have to do to get in the kingdom?” And when Jesus answers his question, he comes up with another question to justify himself: “Who is my neighbor?”

When we give directions to our kids, the testing of those limits immediately follows. “So I can’t do this, but can I do this?” As people, we always seek to know the “bottom line.” What is the least thing I can do to satisfy the authority figure? But this way of thinking has nothing to do with being “created in Christ Jesus for good works.”

To answer the question about faith and works, I want to refer to St. Cyril of Alexandria:

*Human beings choose their own way of life and are entrusted with the reins of their own intelligence; so as to follow whatever course*

*they wish, either toward the good or toward the contrary. But our [original, created] nature has implanted in it a zealous desire for whatever is good and the will to concern itself with goodness and righteousness. For this is what we mean by saying that humanity is in the image and likeness of God, that the creature is naturally disposed to what is good and right. (Comment on Ephesians 2:10)*

I think it is wonderful that we hear the gospel of the Good Samaritan right around the beginning of the Advent Fast. It offers us the opportunity to get to a real sense of what it means to be human. We need to rediscover that we, who have been created in Christ Jesus for good works, are naturally disposed to do what is right and good. But to do so we have to get rid of the “stinking thinking” of our lives and fight the passions that so often get the better of us. We must learn to think in terms of what we need and not what we want. We need to discover that when we sin, it is wrong to say, “I am only human, cut me some slack.”

This is not what it means to be human. By practicing the spiritual exercises the Church gives us, we take steps toward finding this natural disposition in us to do what is right and good. When a tree produces fruit, it doesn't struggle to do so. It is in the nature of an orange tree to produce oranges. The story of the Good Samaritan shows us how it is natural for a human being (the Samaritan as the image of Christ) to what is good and right. May we come to experience this reality in our family life as we journey towards the advent of our Lord.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you,

The unworthy +Paul

Glory to God for  
all things!