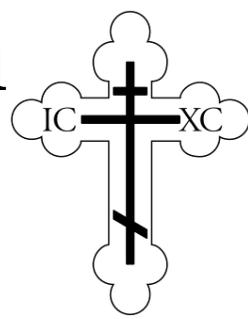
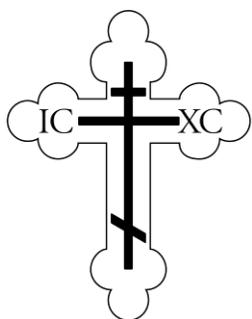


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



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



8600 Grand Blvd.
Merrillville, IN 46410
(219)947-4748
Hall: (219)730-4698
www.ptvm.com

Rev. Dr. Jacob Van Sickle
(219)384-6826 • frjacobvansickle@gmail.com

Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays

Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays

Confession is available before or
after Vespers or by
appointment.

December 27, 2020

Third Day of Nativity

Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, David the
King, and James the Brother of the Lord

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 4 – Resurrectional Troparion

When the women disciples of the Lord
learned from the angel the joyous message of Your resurrection,
they cast away the ancestral curse
and elatedly told the apostles:

“Death is overthrown!

Christ our God is risen,//
granting the world great mercy!”

Tone 4 – Troparion of Nativity

Your Nativity, O Christ our God,
has shone to the world the light of wisdom!
For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
were taught by a star to adore You,
the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know You, the Orient from on high.//
O Lord, glory to You!

Tone 2 – Troparion for the Righteous Ones

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph,
to David, the ancestor of God;
you have seen a Virgin great with child;
and you gave glory with the shepherds;
you worshipped with the Magi,
and received the news from the Angel.//
Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 3 – Kontakion for the Righteous Ones

Today godly David is filled with joy;
Joseph and James offer praise.
The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy.
They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth,//
and they cry out: “O Compassionate One, save those who honor You!”

Tone 3 – Kontakion of Nativity

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One!
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!
The wise men journey with the star,//
since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 4 – Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 103)

O Lord, how manifold are Your works;
in wisdom have You made them all

Tone 4 – Prokeimenon for the Righteous Ones (Psalm 67)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel!

Epistle: Galatians 1.11-19 (Sunday after Nativity)

Brethren: I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Gospel: Matthew 2.13-23 (Sunday after Nativity)

At that time, when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Mary Ann Caravana
 Ernst Pedersen
 Barbara Kurth
 Mary Ann Behnke
 Mitch Bright
 Archbishop David

Ev.Mem. Simeon Grek ('34)
 Anga Murnkoff ('53)
 Moses Tanchuk ('83)
 John Molchan ('88)
 Joann Dorroll (2003)
 Thomas Swallow (2004)

Health & Salv.

Archpr. Peter
 Mat. Margaret
 Mat. Anne
 Mat. Nancy
 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
 Anthony

Janet
 Daryl
 Diane
 Carla
 Susan
 Timothy
 William
 Paul
 Joseph
 Linda
 Claudia
 Tom
 Beth
 Elizabeth
 Snezana
 Nathan
 Kara
 Ryan
 Thomas
 Carol
 Christine
 Jon
 Zoey
 Dominic
 Declan

Hudson	Alexander	Mark
TaQuana	Ronald	Julie
Ayden	Theodore	Christine
Hyland	Robert	Dale
Jason	Mary Ann	Ashley
Ted	Lara	Abbey
James	Craig	Hillary
Pamela	Chuck	
Erin	Scott	

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Immediately following announcements, our Church School children will perform a short **Yolka** here in the Nave.

Then, after venerating the Cross, there will be a **panakhida** for the newly departed **Mary Ann Caravana**, Linda Svihra's mother.

2021 Calendars and Stewardship Envelopes are available for pick-up in the Narthex.

Mark your calendars:

Dec 31: **Great Vespers** for the Feast of **Christ's Circumcision**

Jan 1: **Divine Liturgy** for the Feast of **Christ's Circumcision @ 10am**

Jan 5: **Vigil with the Great Blessing of Water for Theophany @ 6pm**

Jan 6: **Divine Liturgy** for the Feast of **Theophany @ 10am**

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$2,097

Yolka Lyrics

Troparion of Nativity – Traditional Serbian Melody

Thy Nativity, O our God,
 has shone to the world the light of wisdom!
 For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
 were taught by a star to adore Thee,
 the Sun of Righteousness,
 and to know Thee, the Orient from on high.
 O Lord, glory to Thee!

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, o come ye, to Bethlehem.

Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels!

O come, let us adore Him;

O come, let us adore Him;

O come, let us adore Him,

Christ the Lord!

2020 Nativity Message

of His Eminence, our Archbishop Paul

Since March of this year, our faith has been tested by the pandemic. Some have left parishes that wear masks or use other methods of giving communion to attend other parishes that don't follow these practices. Some are afraid to go to church for fear of getting the virus. In the case of people 65 and older, this is understandable because many of them may be at high risk due to other health care issues. Attendance at church has been limited because of the continued huge increase of people coming down with Covid 19 (recently over 245,000 cases in one day were reported in our country); deaths have increased as well. Hospital beds are filling up again with people who have come down with the virus. Everyone has their own opinions about how this virus is being dealt with in our churches. This has intensified the discord among some people over this.

We have seen black men and women killed by the police leading to peaceful protests and demonstrations. Unfortunately, others have used this terrible tragedy to justify the intentional, violent looting and destruction of property. This has only intensified peoples' fears and done more harm to local businesses.

People are suffering from depression, and despair; some have lost their jobs and some businesses have closed due to the virus and the restrictions placed on them by state and local authorities.

As we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord this year, what do our worship and the wisdom of our Holy Fathers offer to help us make sense of this? I put before you this day the examples of two men, King Herod of Judea, and Joseph, the Betrothed to the Virgin Mary and foster father of our Lord. Both dealt with this Good News in entirely different manners. One of the verses from the 9th Royal Hour describes Herod's response:

Herod was filled with alarm when he saw the righteous wise men.

Overcome by fury, he determined precisely when the child was born.

Mothers were robbed of their infants: Their tender lives were reaped as a bitter harvest. Milk stopped flowing and breasts dried up. Great was the

suffering! Therefore, assemble in holy fear, O faithful, to worship the birth of Christ!

King Herod initially deceived the wise men to find out how he could see the Infant in Bethlehem in order to “worship Him.” But this was not the case. The gospel states Herod “in a furious rage” slew all the infants under two when the wise men left him (Matthew 2:16). St Gregory Palamas gives us an insight into the nature of this rage in his homily on the Nativity:

The author of evil (Lucifer) did not want to be lower than any of the angels, but to be equal in excellence to the Creator Himself; he was the first to suffer the terrible fall before anyone else. Smitten by envy, he deceitfully attacked Adam and dragged him down to the abyss of Hades by means of the same desire. By so doing, he made Adam’s fall difficult to reverse, and it required God’s extraordinary presence, which has now been accomplished, to restore him. His own fall (Lucifer’s), however, he rendered incurable once and for all, because he did not acquire his arrogance from anyone else, but became himself the principle of evil and fullness of evil, and made himself available to anyone wishing to participate in evil.

Herod’s arrogance and pride blinded him from the experience and joy of this blessed event. The birth of the Divine Infant in the Cave posed a threat to him, which he could not tolerate. He wanted to be treated as an equal to God and not as an earthly king. He became a participant in evil and killed 14000 innocent infants thinking he would kill the Divine Infant born in the Cave. We now turn to Joseph the Betrothed where we see something different.

When Joseph went up to Bethlehem, his heart was filled with sadness. But you cried out to him, O Virgin: Why are you so troubled? Why are you in misery seeing me with a child? Do you not understand at all? I bear a fearful mystery! Cast your fears away, and learn a strange wonder: God in His mercy descends from heaven to earth. Within my womb He has taken flesh! When He is pleased to be born you will see Him. You will rejoice, and worship Him, your Creator. The angels ceaselessly praise Him in song, glorifying Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit. (from the 9th Royal Hour of Nativity)

Joseph was beset with doubt and was initially bothered by this news. He may have been scandalized and because of this news, sought to divorce Mary quietly so as to not shame her (Matthew 1:19). The words from the above verse of the 9th Hour of the Nativity show that something different was going on with Joseph. Mary issues a poetic plea to him to “cast your fears away, and learn a strange wonder.” By so doing He will come to “rejoice, and worship Him, your Creator.” What was in Joseph’s

heart that allowed him to conquer his initial doubt and sadness? Once again we turn to St. Gregory of Palamas:

Now since it was God's good pleasure to annul the pretext for that pride which brought down His rational creatures, He makes everything like Himself...He makes the creation equal to itself by grace and equal in honor. And how was this done? The very word of God from God emptied Himself in an indescribable way, came down from on high to the lowest state of man's nature, and indissolubly linked it with Himself, and in humbling Himself and becoming poor like us, He raised on high the things below, or rather, He gathered both things into one, mingling humanity with divinity, and by so doing, He taught everyone that humility is the road which leads upwards, setting forth today Himself as an example before men and holy angels alike.

Joseph may have been sad and troubled, but not angry or bitter. His heart was open to being taught. More importantly, he was open to embracing this road to humility that led to the Divine Infant in the Cave. Here he would learn the Good News concerning our Incarnate Lord:

Today heaven and earth are united, for Christ is born. Today God has come to earth, and man ascends to heaven. Today God, who by nature cannot be seen, is seen in the flesh for our sake. Let us glorify Him, crying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace! Your coming has brought peace to us: Glory to You, our Savior! (Litya verse of the Nativity)

We have a choice that is set before us this day. Let us renounce the pride and arrogance of King Herod who rejected the Divine Infant in the Cave. This hardness can find its way into us if we do not guard our heart. This way only leads to death where there is no hope. Do not let the events of this past year lead us to the point that we become resentful, bitter and arrogant. This is nothing more than the vice of pride.

The other choice before us is the example of Joseph; he was tested as he had doubts. He wondered if this really was "Good News" that Mary was to give birth to our Lord. But he heard the voice of the angel who visited him; he heard the voice of the Virgin Mother who encouraged him. He was lead to the Divine Infant in the Cave, and embraced Him with joy. It was the virtue of humility that led him there. Let this be the choice we make leading to life. This will not only enable us to cope with the temptations the events the last 9 months have brought us, **but to conquer them in Christ!**

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

With love in Christ,

Archbishop Paul