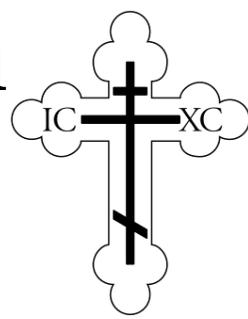
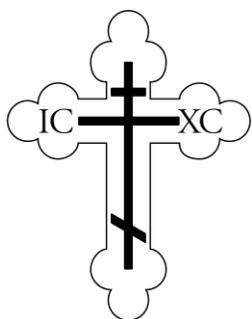


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



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



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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.

January 10, 2021

Afterfeast of Theophany

St. Gregory of Nyssa

St Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, was a younger brother of Saint Basil the Great. His birth and upbringing came at a time when the Arian disputes were at their height. Having received an excellent education, he was at one time a teacher of rhetoric. In the year 372, he was consecrated by St Basil the Great as bishop of the city of Nyssa in Cappadocia.

St Gregory was an ardent advocate for Orthodoxy, and he fought against the Arian heresy with his brother St Basil. Gregory was persecuted by the Arians, by whom he was falsely accused of improper use of church property, and thereby deprived of his See and sent to Ancyra.

In the following year St Gregory was again deposed in absentia by a council of Arian bishops, but he continued to encourage his flock in Orthodoxy, wandering about from place to place. After the death of the emperor Valens (378), St Gregory was restored to his cathedra and was joyously received by his flock. His brother St Basil the Great died in 379.

Only with difficulty did St Gregory survive the loss of his brother and guide. He delivered a funeral oration for him, and completed St Basil's study of the six days of Creation, the Hexaemeron. That same year St Gregory participated in the Council of Antioch against heretics who refused to recognize the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God. Others at the opposite extreme, who worshipped the Mother of God as being God Herself, were also denounced by the Council. He visited the churches of Arabia and Palestine, which were infected with the Arian heresy, to assert the Orthodox teaching about the Most Holy Theotokos. On his return journey, St Gregory visited Jerusalem and the Holy Places.

In the year 381, St Gregory was one of the chief figures of the Second Ecumenical Council, convened at Constantinople against the heresy of Macedonius, who incorrectly taught about the Holy Spirit. At this Council, on the initiative of St Gregory, the Nicæan Symbol of Faith (the Creed) was completed.

St Gregory of Nyssa was a fiery defender of Orthodox dogmas and a zealous teacher of his flock, a kind and compassionate father to his spiritual children, and their intercessor before the courts. He was distinguished by his magnanimity, patience and love of peace.

Having reached old age, St Gregory of Nyssa died soon after the Council of Constantinople. Together with his great contemporaries, Sts Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, St Gregory of Nyssa had a significant influence on the Church life of his time. His sister, St Macrina, wrote to him: "You are renowned both in the cities, and gatherings of people, and throughout entire districts. Churches ask you for help." St Gregory is known in history as one of the most profound Christian thinkers of the fourth century. St Gregory left behind many remarkable works of dogmatic character, as well as sermons and discourses. He has been called "the Father of Fathers."

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 6 – Resurrectional Troparion

The angelic powers were at Your tomb;
the guards became as dead men.

Mary stood by Your grave,
seeking Your most pure body.

You captured hell,
not being tempted by it.

You came to the Virgin granting life.//

O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Tone 4 – Troparion of the Feast

When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan,
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.

For the voice of the Father bore witness to You,
and called You His beloved Son;

and the Spirit in the form of a dove
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.

O Christ our God, You have revealed Yourself//
and hast enlightened the world, glory to You.

Tone 4 – Troparion for St. Gregory

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith,
an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence;

your humility exalted you;
your poverty enriched you.

O Hierarch Father Gregory,
entreat Christ our God//

that our souls may be saved!

Tone 6 – Resurrectional Kontakion

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,

raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race.//

He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Tone 4 – Kontakion for St. Gregory

You kept watch with the eyes of your soul, O holy bishop,
revealing yourself as a watchful pastor for the world.

With the staff of your wisdom and your fervent intercession,
you drove away all heretics like wolves,//

and preserved your flock free from harm, O most wise Gregory.

Tone 4 – Kontakion of the Feast

Today You have shone forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Your countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing You, we sing Your praises:
“You have come and revealed Yourself, //
O unapproachable Light.”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 6 – Prokeimenon for the Feast (Psalm 32)

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us
as we have set our hope on You!

Epistle: Ephesians 4.7-13 (Sunday after Theophany)

Brethren: To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. For this reason, the Scripture says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” Now this, “He ascended” – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Gospel: Matthew 4.12-17 (Sunday after Theophany)

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Mary Ann Caravana

Ernst Pedersen

Barbara Kurth

Mary Ann Behnke

Ev.Mem. Florinka Georgeff ('24)

Grigori Glazchuk ('33)

Vera Ordinsky ('37)

Gregory Labashevich ('42)

Helen Ralich ('49)

Terenty Cidylo ('64)

Daniel Doneff ('97)

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

TaQuana

Ayden

Hyland

Jason

Ted

James

Pamela

Erin

Alexander

Ronald

Theodore

Robert

Lara

Craig

Chuck

Scott

Mark

Julie

Christine

Dale

Ashley

Abbey

Hillary

Sergei

Connie

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

Instead of *"It is Truly Meet..."* we sing:

Magnify, O my soul, the most-pure Virgin Theotokos,
more honorable than the heavenly hosts.

No tongue knows how to praise you worthily, O Theotokos;
even Angels are overcome with awe praising you.

But since you are good, accept our faith;
for you know our love inspired by God.

You are the defender of Christians, and we magnify you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

House Blessings are complicated by the ongoing pandemic. As in every year, I want to bless as many homes as will have me. However, I am concerned that I might pick up the virus and spread it to others as I go house to house. Therefore, I have settled on the following procedures for blessing homes this year:

1. I will bless homes for any who ask. Please do not be shy!
2. I will wear a mask and ask that those in the home wear a mask and social distance while I am in the home. Also, I will not stay for fellowship.
3. I will bless homes only on Mondays. This way, if I become exposed in the course of blessing homes, there will be time for me to learn of the exposure and/or develop symptoms before I would go on to expose anyone else.
4. For any who are not comfortable having me in their home at this time, please know that I understand. For them, I have prepared a short service of blessing that they may use to bless their own home with Holy Water from the Church. A service booklet may be picked up from the table in the Narthex.

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

Please **let our hall manager know ASAP** if you need to reserve any dates in 2021.

Wednesday evening **Bible Study** resumes over Zoom this week at 7pm. We will begin reading 1 Kingdoms (known in Protestant Bibles as 1 Samuel). Please read chapters 1-4 for this week.

Please **take home any poinsettias** you would like.

We need everyone's reports in for the **annual meeting report book** by **next week**.

Mark your calendars:

Jan 12: **O-Club meeting @ 7pm (Zoom)**

Jan 13: **Bible Study @ 7pm (Zoom)**

Jan 14: **Divine Liturgy for the Leavetaking of Theophany @ 10am**

Feb 14: **Annual Parish Meeting** after Divine Liturgy

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$4,110

“We Rejoice even in Tribulation”

An Encyclical of Hope from the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America (part 2)

THROUGH BROKENNESS INTO JOY

It is, of course, one thing to say that our trials and sufferings are opportunities to enter into the love of God, and another to live such a paradox moment by moment. At times, our fear and grief may leave us angry and confused, asking, “How can good possibly come of this?” But the Lord has not left us the paradox of life from death as a puzzle, like a Rubik's Cube that only the very clever can solve — no! Through the mystery of His Cross and Resurrection He has unlocked the door for us, and He Himself shows us how to pursue this process of transformation, a path that takes us through our brokenness into joy.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR FEAR

First, we must not be ashamed to admit that we feel fear. Christ has inspired the words of Holy Scripture that abound with expressions of fear and anxiety, particularly in the psalms. At Vespers the Church cries out:

With my voice unto the Lord have I cried, with my voice unto the Lord have I made supplication. [...] When my spirit was fainting within me, then Thou knewest my paths” (Ps 141).

At Compline, Matins, and in many moliebens or parakleses, we pray Psalm 142:

My spirit within me was despondent, within me, my heart was troubled. [...] Quickly hear me, O Lord; my spirit has fainted away.

The Six Psalms of Matins, in particular, give voice to our experience of suffering and fear:

“O Lord, why are they multiplied that afflict me” (Ps 3)? “I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly, I have roared from the groaning of my heart. [...] My heart is troubled, my strength hath failed me; and the light of mine eyes, even this is not with me” (Ps 37). “I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am become as a man without help, free among the dead, like the bodies of the slain that sleep in the grave, whom Thou rememberest no more, and they are cut off from Thy hand” (Ps 87).

In Psalm 87 we express our deepest fear: to become like those whom God remembers no more, who are cut off from His hand. We fear that God has forgotten us, that He has discarded us. We feel this fear because it is we who, temporarily at least, forgot God. We forgot that we are His creation and we are in His hands, and our self-imposed separation from His life-giving presence has finally overwhelmed us. When we realize our feelings of fear, anger, anxiety or despondency, it is an opportunity to look at ourselves and our relationship with God. Somehow our hearts have strayed from Him; but through the tribulations we are experiencing, God is calling us to return to Him by embracing our own cross and resurrection.

Glory to God for all things!