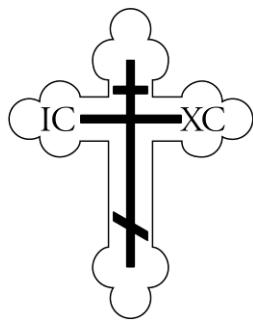
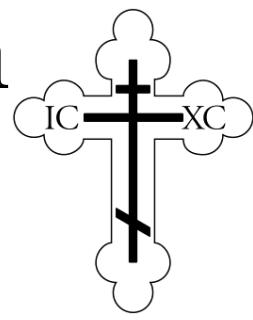


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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



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(219)947-4748
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www.ptvm.com

Rev. Dr. Jacob Van Sickle

(219)384-6826 • frjacovansickle@gmail.com

Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays

Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays

Confession is available before or
after Vespers or by appointment

January 31, 2021

Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John

St Cyrus was a noted physician in the city of Alexandria, where he had been born and raised. He was a Christian and he treated the sick without charge, not only curing their bodily afflictions, but also healing their spiritual infirmities. He would say, "Whoever wishes to avoid being ill should refrain from sin, for sin is often the cause of bodily illness." Preaching the Gospel, the holy physician converted many pagans to Christ. During the persecution by Diocletian (284-305), St Cyrus withdrew into Arabia, where he became a monk. He continued to heal people by his prayer, having received from God the gift to heal every sickness.

In the city of Edessa at this time lived the soldier John, a pious Christian. When the persecution started, he went to Jerusalem and there he heard about St Cyrus. He began to search for him, going first to Alexandria and then to Arabia. When St John finally found St Cyrus, he remained with him and became his faithful follower.

They learned of the arrest of the Christian woman Athanasia and her three young daughters. Theoctiste was fifteen; Theodota, was thirteen; and Eudoxia, was eleven. Sts Cyrus and John hastened to the prison to help them. They were concerned that faced with torture, the women might renounce Christ.

Sts Cyrus and John gave them courage to endure what lay before them. Learning of this, the ruler of the city arrested Cyrus and John, and seeing their steadfast and fearless confession of faith in Christ, he brought Athanasia and her daughters to witness their torture. The tyrant did not refrain from any form of torture against the holy martyrs. The women were not frightened by the sufferings of the Saints, but courageously continued to confess Christ. They were flogged and then beheaded, receiving their crowns of martyrdom.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 1 – Resurrectional Troparion

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body,
You rose on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ!

Glory to Your Kingdom!//

Glory to Your dispensation, O You who love mankind!”

Tone 4 – Patronal Troparion

Today the faithful celebrate the feast with joy,
illumined by your coming, O Mother of God.

Beholding your pure image we fervently cry to you:

Encompass us beneath the precious veil of your protection.

Deliver us from every form of evil

by entreating Christ, your Son and our God//

that He may save our souls.

Tone 5 – Troparion for Sts. Cyrus and John

O Christ God;

You have given us the miracles of Your martyrs Cyrus and John,
as an invincible rampart;

through their prayers, frustrate the plans of the heathens,

and strengthen the faith of the Orthodox Christians,//

for You alone are good and love mankind.

Tone 1 – Resurrectional Kontakion

As God, You rose from the tomb in glory,
raising the world with Yourself.

Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished.
Adam exults, O Master!

Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to You://
“You are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

Tone 3 – Kontakion for Sts Cyrus and John

Having received the gift of miracles through divine grace, O saints,
you work wonders in the world unceasingly.

You remove all of our passions through your invisible surgery,
divinely-wise Cyrus and glorious John,/
for you are truly divine physicians.

Tone 3 – Patronal Kontakion

Today the Virgin stands in the midst of the Church,
And with choirs of saints she invisibly prays to God for us.
Angels and bishops worship.
Apostles and prophets rejoice together,/
Since for our sake she prays to the eternal God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 1 – Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 32)

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

Epistle: Colossians 3.12-16

Brethren: As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 25.14-30

The Lord spoke this parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

“Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise, he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.

“After a long time, the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So, he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’

“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

“He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’

“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So, you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore, take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.’

“For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Vern Orr
Jeffrey Smith
Blythe
Darrell Hall
Pr. James Doyle
Rodney Veselica
Mildred Drozik
Mary Ann Caravana

Health & Salv.

Archpr. Peter
Mat. Margaret
Mat. Anne
Pr. Christopher
Mat. Jennifer
Andrew
Gideon
Kevin
Jon
Tanya
Jovan
Julia
Warren
Tom
Tina
Jennifer
Gail
Stacy
Jeramie
Olivia
Parker
Christine
Larry
Rollie
Joseph
Nadia
Brendan
David
Sharon

Michael
Janie
Tanya
Christopher
Nina
Renee
Carissa
Cynthia
John
Olga
Mark
Jerry
Michael
Anthony
Janet
Daryl
Diane
Carla
Susan
Timothy
William
Paul
Joseph
Linda
Claudia
Elizabeth
Snezana
Nathan
Kara
Ryan

Thomas
Carol
Christine
Jon
Zoey
Dominic
Declan
Hudson
Ayden
Hyland
Jason
Ted
James
Pamela
Erin
Alexander
Ronald
Theodore
Robert
Craig
Chuck
Scott
Mark
Christine
Dale
Ashley
Abbey
Hillary
Pauline
Mary

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please contact Fr Jacob if you would like to **schedule a house blessing this year**. Otherwise, I have prepared a short service of blessing that you may use to bless your own home with Holy Water from the Church. A service booklet may be picked up from the table in the Narthex.

For **Bible Study** Wednesday read **1 Kingdoms (1 Samuel) 8-10.**

Mark your calendars:

Feb 1: Great Vespers @ 6pm for the Meeting of the Lord

Feb 2: Divine Liturgy @ 10am for the Meeting of the Lord

Feb 3: Bible Study @ 7pm (Zoom)

Feb 14: Annual Parish Meeting after Divine Liturgy

Livestream with Archbishop Paul: “Who is God?” @ 7pm

Feb 19: Red Cross Blood Drive 12p-6p

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$3,200

“We Rejoice even in Tribulation”

**An Encyclical of Hope from the Holy Synod of Bishops
of the Orthodox Church in America (part 4)**

JOURNEYING INTO GOD'S KINGDOM

What is remarkable is that even while we endure shared tribulations — the pandemic, political turmoil, civil strife, disasters — each of us is on a unique, personal journey of transformation in Christ, and these tribulations God has arranged for each one of us in a personal, profound way. On the other hand, while each of us has an entirely unique life and journey, there are always companions near us who have experienced something similar and understand our pain. Each of us is unique, but none of us is alone. Moreover, we are all on the same path, we have the same vocation and goal: life in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, by the will of the Father.

Our beloved brothers and sisters, we do not know what we will encounter in the coming year, but we know our ultimate destination. May the Lord's will be done in our lives, that His

Kingdom may come! If we can look back on 2020 — truly, a year of Our Lord — with confession, repentance, and thanksgiving, we can face the uncertainty of the future with peace, joy, and hope. This task will not always be easy; we are surrounded by temptations to live in fear, isolation, division, and despair. But let us use the tools God has given us to soften our hearts and open our eyes! We can draw inspiration from the experience of so many who testified that even in the face of so much, the life of the Church continued: the faithful were baptized, married, ordained, and buried. Missions were begun and supported. Praise and thanksgiving to God never ceased.

Further, let us remember the Lord's blessings far more than we contemplate tribulations. Even when we encounter very serious challenges, God gives us countless consolations, which we often take for granted! The Akathist of Thanksgiving is a beautiful service written from within a Soviet gulag, a place of intense darkness and pain. The praise offered to the Lord therein reminds us of all the beauty and love around us, even as we suffer. We also have the Akathist to the Theotokos, Joy of All Who Sorrow, bringing us to the feet of the Theotokos, our mother. She who stood at the foot of the Cross and whose heart was pierced also received the first tidings of the Resurrection. She is given to us as a helper, consoler, and protector, and with her, all the saints. The accounts of their lives and their beautiful, inspired writings, help us along our way and remind us to give thanks for all things.

We have already considered the helpfulness of the psalms, and these ancient songs make up the bulk of the services of the Church. If you are at all able, go to your church for services, whether indoor or outdoor; pray along with services from our parishes and monasteries online; pray the services of Vespers, Matins, or Compline in your home, which is the Little Church. You will pray the psalms, and the psalms will begin to pray inside of you. You will join your voice to the voices of all the faithful, through all the centuries and millennia.

Dear ones, let us also consider the prayer inside the secret place of our hearts (Mt 6:6). It is not enough for us to go to church once or twice a week. We must also have an inner life of prayer, cultivated in quietness and stillness. Our monastics work very deliberately at such prayer, but such prayer is not only for them! Each of us can, in whatever way suits the circumstances of our life, make time to “be still, and know that I am God” (Ps 45:10).

Meditation upon Scripture is a precious gift to embrace during such quiet time. St. John Chrysostom exhorted his flock again and again to read the Scriptures zealously and to teach them to children, for “great is the profit to be derived from the sacred Scriptures and their assistance is sufficient for every need” (Hom. 37 on John). Christ is the Word of God, and He meets and speaks with us through the words of Scripture as He spoke with the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:27).

As we enrich our inner lives with quiet prayer and Scripture, when we participate in the services offered through the Church, we will find that we approach the Holy Mysteries with a renewed sense of need. Let us run to confession with our priests, and receive the Lord’s Body and Blood with faith and love! He gives us Himself as food, so that we may receive Him in our hearts and return to the world to make Him incarnate here and now. Through all these efforts, we will become whole; we will not have compartments of our life “at home,” “at church,” and “at work.” All our life will become integrated as a seamless “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (Rom 12:1). By these efforts we obey Paul’s injunction that we “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2). But this will be a gradual process: we will not jump from struggles to sainthood in a week, a month, or a year. What are the steps we can take right now, however small? When we take even a tiny step towards Christ, He runs to meet us as the Father ran to meet the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:20)! He will send the Holy Spirit into our hearts, nursing even a tiny spark into an ever-greater flame. We must have perseverance, but Christ promises us hope: “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who was given to us” (Rom 5:5).

Glory to God for all things!