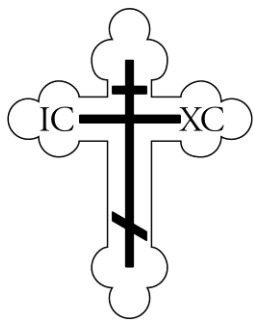
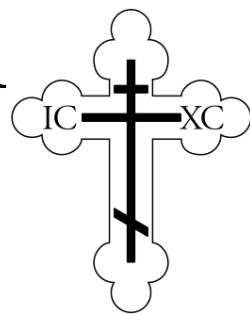


# Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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](mailto:frjacobvansickle@gmail.com)

Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays

Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays

Confession is available before or  
after Vespers or by appointment

**Welcome visitors!**  
**Please join us in the**  
**parish hall after Divine**  
**Liturgy for coffee hour.**

## April 11, 2021 Fourth Sunday of Great Lent: Saint John of the Ladder

*On the Sundays of Great Lent, we celebrate the Divine  
Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.*

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to St John of the Ladder (Climacus), the author of the book *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The abbot of St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom (Mt 10:12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (Eph 6:12). St John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt 24:13).

# HYMNS OF THE DAY

## Tone 3 – Resurrectional Troparion

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

## Tone 4 – Patronal Troparion

Today the faithful celebrate the feast with joy,

illuminated 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 1 – Troparion for St John

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,

you were a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father John.

You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil and prayer,

healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to you by faith.

Glory to Him Who gave you strength!

Glory to Him Who granted you a <sup>^</sup>crown!//

Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

## Tone 3 – Resurrectional Kontakion

On this day You rose from the tomb, O Merciful One,

leading us from the gates of death.

On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices

with the Prophets and Patriarchs.//

They unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power.

## Tone 4 – Kontakion for St John

The Lord truly set you on the heights of abstinence,

to be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe,//

O our father and teacher John.

### **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 3 – Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 46)**

Sing praises to our God, sing praises!  
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

### **Tone 7 – Prokeimenon for St John of the Ladder**

Let the saints exult in glory; / let them sing for joy on their couches!

### **Epistle: Hebrews 6.13-20 (Sunday)**

Brethren: when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

### **Ephesians 5.9-19 (for St John)**

Brethren, the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth; finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

Therefore, He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

### **Gospel: Mark 9.17-31 (Sunday)**

At that time, one of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”

Jesus answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.”

Then they brought him to Jesus. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

So Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood. And often it has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”

Immediately, the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!”

Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.”

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”

So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

### **Matthew 4.25-5.12 (for St John)**

Great multitudes followed Jesus – from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

## **WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**N.Dep.** Joseph Starkey

Erin Brady

**Ev.Mem.** Sue Guba (2009)

Strebra Parkevich ('77)

Onufrey Barancyk ('60)

Simeon Mikatuk ('57)

Agnes Skoluk ('56)

Theodosy Evaniuk ('47)

Lukian Stankevich ('23)

Natalia Sarafin ('23)

Stephen Gladun ('16)

**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	Craig
Joseph	Linda	Chuck
Nadia	Claudia	Scott
Brendan	Elizabeth	Mark
David	Snezana	Christine
Sharon	Nathan	Dale
Michael	Kara	Pauline
Janie	Ryan	Mary
Tanya	Thomas	Jessika & family
Christopher	Carol	Timothy
Nina	Christine	Lisa
Renee	Jon	Lois
Carissa	Zoey	Michael
Cynthia	Dominic	Janice
John	Declan	Ken
Olga	Hudson	Debbie
Mark	Ayden	Jacqueline
Jerry	Hyland	Dara
Michael	Jason	Cindy
Anthony	Ted	Daniel
Daryl	James	Laura
Diane	Pamela	Dorothy
Carla	Erin	Vasiliy
Susan	Alexander	William
Timothy	Ronald	Wanda
William	Theodore	Cindy
Paul	Robert	Mary

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

After venerating the cross, we will serve the **19-year Memorial for Mat. Ann Rozdelsky.**

We continue to take precautions during the health crisis. Everyone except celebrants and choir must be masked and maintain distance between groups. Those seeking to limit their exposure to larger groups are encouraged to take advantage of **weekday services** with lower attendance.

Our **men's group** is once again making **sausage** in time for Pascha. Order forms are available in the Narthex.

During Great Lent, Orthodox Christians **make more time for prayer, deny themselves rich and satisfying foods** (meat, dairy, and perhaps fish), and find opportunities to **help those in need** (this is almsgiving). They also examine their consciences and repent of their sins before the Lord in the **Sacrament of Confession**. Confession is available before or after evening services. You can also make an appointment with Fr Jacob any time, including before Sunday Liturgy, if necessary.

The parishes of the Chicago deanery each year usually collaborate to host a series of **Lenten Sunday Vespers** services. These Sunday Vespers are back again this year, but because of the pandemic, parishioners from other Churches are asked to remain home and participate via livestream. **Pick up a flyer** in the Narthex for information about when Sunday Vespers are happening this year and where you can find the Livestreams.

### **Mark your calendars:**

Apr 14: **Presanctified Liturgy @ 6pm**

Apr 15: **Great Canon of St. Andrew with the Life of St. Mary of Egypt @ 10am**

Apr 16: **Presanctified Liturgy @ 10am**  
**Blood Drive @ 12pm**

Apr 17: **Spring Cleaning the Church @ 9am**

Apr 19: **Livestream with Archbishop Paul: Who is Jesus Christ? @ 7pm – [www.midwestfamily.com](http://www.midwestfamily.com)**

**Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$2,695**

# **The Victory of the Cross**

**A Reflection by His Eminence, our Archbishop Paul**

## **Ode 1 Triodion Canon Verse, Sunday of the Cross**

*Mighty Cross of the Lord, manifest yourself, showing me the divine vision of your beauty! Grant that I may worthily venerate you, for I speak to you and embrace you as alive!*

Last Sunday and this week we place the Holy Cross in our churches to remind us where we are going. The Cross is placed in the midst of the Church. It is decorated with flowers pointing to the

joy and victory the Cross brings us. It leads us to the end goal of Great Lent, the Holy Pascha of our Lord! We need to be reminded of this, because sometimes we get lost in the ascetical practices of the fast, and we lose sight of where we are going. The Cross is that marker placed at the midpoint of Lent to get us back on track.

It reminds me of when I would make my drive from Michigan to St. Vladimir's Seminary in the early 90's at the beginning of each semester. It is a 12-hour drive that I did in one shot. Along the way, around the time when I began to get irritated at the length of the drive, there was a marker either in northeast Ohio, or western Pennsylvania that I would pass. It stated that New York was 900 miles away. When I saw this, it helped me to get refocused on my journey and the end goal of my travel.

How can we use the Cross in our daily family life to remind ourselves of the end goal of Lent? Here are some thoughts.

- Do you place a Cross that is decorated with flowers in your icon corner as is done in church?
- Do you sing the Troparion "O Lord Save Your people..." during your daily prayers?
- Do you sing the hymn, "Before Thy Cross..." at least once a day with the appropriate prostrations?
- Have a family discussion this week about what each member looks forward to in anticipating the Pascha of our Lord.
  - Besides breaking the fast, what bad habit does each member look forward to overcoming because of the victory of the Cross?
  - What virtue does one look forward to acquiring due to the victory of the Cross?
- Discuss as a family how one can be more oriented to thinking of others and their well-being, instead of one's own. How can one humbly be more visible in sharing one's love for another?

May the Lord continue to bless the remaining time of the Great Fast. May you all come to know the divine vision and beauty of the Cross. May this be an ever-present and living reality in all of our lives!

In Christ's love,

Archbishop Paul

# Glory to God for all things!