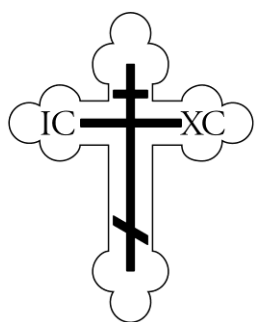


Protection of the Virgin Mary

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

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

August 22, 2021

Afterfeast of Dormition

Holy Martyr Agathonicus of Nicomedia

The Martyr Agathonicus was descended from the illustrious lineage of the Hypasians, and he lived at Nicomedia. Well versed in Holy Scripture, he converted many pagans to Christ, including the most eminent member of the Senate (its “princeps” or leader). Comitatus Eutolmius was sent to the region of Pontus (near the Black Sea), where he crucified the followers of the Christian bishop Zoticus, who refused to offer sacrifice to idols.

In Nicomedia, Eutolmius arrested the Martyr Agathonicus and also his companions Theoprepus, Acindynus and Severian. After tortures, Eutolmius ordered that the martyrs be taken to Thrace for trial by the emperor Maximian. But along the way, the Martyrs Zoticus, Theoprepus and Acindynus were unable to proceed further behind the chariot of the governor because of wounds received

during torture. Therefore, they were put to death. The Martyr Severian was put to death at Chalcedon, and the Martyr Agathonicus together with others was beheaded with the sword after a trial in Selymbria (near modern Istanbul) by order of the emperor.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 8 – Resurrectional Troparion

You descended from on high, O Merciful One!

You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to You!

Tone 1 – Troparion of Dormition

In giving birth you preserved your virginity.

In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos.

You were translated to life O Mother of Life,//

and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

Tone 4 – Troparion for St. Agathonicus

Your holy martyr Agathonicus and his companions, O Lord,
through their sufferings have received incorruptible crowns from
You, our God.

For having Your strength, they laid low their adversaries,
and shattered the powerless boldness of demons.//

Through their intercession, save our souls!

Tone 8 – Resurrectional Kontakion

By rising from the tomb You raised the dead and resurrected Adam.
Eve exults in Your Resurrection,
and the world celebrates Your rising from the dead, O greatly
Merciful One!

Tone 1 – Kontakion for St. Agathonicus

Having received the good calling, O divinely wise one,
you abandoned the cult of evil men, not fearing their tortures, O
glorious Agathonicus.

Therefore, you have inherited good things//

and worthily received the incorruptible crown with your fellow martyrs.

Tone 2 – Kontakion of Dormition

Neither the tomb, nor death, could hold the Theotokos,
who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions.

For being the Mother of Life,//

she was translated to life by the One Who dwelt in her virginal womb.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 8 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 75)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God!

Tone 3 – Song of the Theotokos (Luke 1)

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

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 3.9-17

Brethren: We are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Gospel: Matthew 14.22-34

At that time, Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray.

Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Mat. Tresja Denysenko

Thomas Kurth

Loretta Molchan

Ev.Mem. Timothy Kovaloff ('23)

Pauline Sheveleff ('36)

Sebastian Makarevich ('50)

Andrew Nepsha ('63)

Anastasia Parfeew ('72)

Harold German ('82)

Anna Sadowski (2008)

Gary Martin (2006)

Nettie Krochta (2007)

Health & Salv.

Archpr. Peter

Mat. Margaret

Mat. Anne

Pr. Christopher

Mat. Jennifer

Andrew

Gideon

Kevin

Jon

Tanya

Jovan

Julia

Tom

Tina

Jennifer

Gail

Stacy

Jeramie

Olivia

Parker

Christine

Larry

Rollie

Joseph

Nadia

Brendan

Tanya

Christopher

Nina

Renee

Carissa

Cynthia

John

Olga

Mark

Jerry

Michael

Anthony

Daryl

Diane

Carla

Susan

Timothy

William

Paul

Joseph

Linda

Claudia

Elizabeth

Snezana

Nathan

Kara

Ryan

Carol

Christine

Jon

Zoey

Dominic

Declan

Hudson

Ayden

Hyland

Jason

Ted

James

Pamela

Erin

Alexander

Ronald	Janice	Ivanka
Theodore	Ken	Susan
Robert	Debbie	Denise
Craig	Jacqueline	Valerie
Chuck	Dara	Jeffrey
Scott	Cindy	Aaron
Mark	Daniel	William
Christine	Laura	Jamie
Dale	Dorothy	Karen
Pauline	Vasiliy	Dale
Mary	William	Jack
Timothy	Wanda	Joyce
Lisa	Cindy	Junia
Lois	Mary	Anna
Michael	Linda	Sandra

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

Festal Theotokion (Instead of “*It is Truly Meet...*”)

The Angels, as they looked upon the Dormition of the Virgin, were struck with wonder, seeing how the Virgin went up from earth to heaven.

The limits of nature are overcome in you, O Pure Virgin: for birthgiving remains virginal, and life is united to death; a virgin after childbearing and alive after death, you ever save your inheritance, O Theotokos.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After venerating the cross, we will serve a **memorial for Mat. Tresja Denysenko.**

For **Bible Study** this week, read 3 Kingdoms (a.k.a. 1 Kings) 16-19.

Church School resumes on Sunday, September 12. Please register your children by recording their names and a parent’s name and phone number for contact on the registration sheet in the Narthex, or by visiting www.ptvm.com and clicking the “Church School” tab.

We are beginning a **new ministry for the young girls** of our parish analogous to the altar boys. They will be given responsibilities during the Divine Liturgy, including greeting at the door and serving the blessed bread and wine during communion. Please let Fr Jacob

know if your daughter or granddaughter would like to serve. Girls should be members of the parish in communion and have had their first confession.

Congregations of Merrillville is holding a luncheon **fundraiser for the Feed the Flock** ministry on Saturday, September 25. Details are on fliers in the narthex. See Mary Ann Bertram or Janet Andrus during coffee hour for tickets.

The **icons of the Life of the Theotokos** in memory of Archpriest Spiro Tanaskoski have been completed! From this point on, if anyone would like to sponsor more iconography in the Church, please see Fr Jacob to discuss options. A perpetual plaque will be installed in the entryway of the Church to commemorate those in whose memory icons are being completed.

Mark your calendars:

Aug 25: **Bible Study @ 7pm**

Aug 26: **Faith Enrichment @ 10am**

Sept 12: **First Sunday of Church School**

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$2,335

Dormition or Assumption?

A reflection by Fr. John Breck

In our Orthodox tradition, we are usually very careful to distinguish between the “Dormition” of the Mother of God and her “Assumption” into heaven. The former, we feel, is properly Orthodox, while the latter strikes us as a purely Western designation, derived from a Roman Catholic “misunderstanding” of the meaning of this feast, celebrated universally on August 15. It is true that some very genuine yet misguided interpretations of Mary’s death and exaltation can be found both in Catholic spiritual writings and in contemporary Western icons: a tendency, for example, to exalt the Holy Virgin to a level of “divinity” that effectively erases the crucial and absolute distinction between human and divine life. Orthodox theologians will insist that the “deification” (*theôsis*) known by the Mother of God in no way involves an ontological transformation of her being from created

humanity to divinity. She was and will always remain a human creature: the most exalted of all those who bear God's image, yet always a human being, whose glory appears in her humility, her simple desire to "let it be" according to the divine will.

Traditional Orthodox icons of her "falling asleep," therefore, focus especially on her death and entombment. The disciples, "gathered together from all the ends of the earth," surround her in an attitude of grief and lament. Behind the bier on which she is laid there stands her glorified Son, holding in His arms a child clothed in radiant white garments, an image of His Mother's soul. This is a theme of reversal. On every Orthodox iconostasis there is found a sacred image of the Mother of God, holding in her arms her newborn child, the God-Man who "took flesh" in order to save and sanctify a fallen, sinful, broken world. Here, in the icon of the Dormition, the Son embraces and offers to that world His Holy Mother, as she did Him at the time of His birth. At her falling asleep He receives her soul, her life, in order to exalt it in Himself and with Himself, to the glory, beauty and joy of eternal life.

In many Orthodox icons, however, this primary image is complemented by another: the depiction of the Mother of God ascending to heaven, accompanied by a host of angels. We find this double motif especially in post-byzantine icons such as the *koimesis* (Dormition) of the Koutloumousiou monastery of Mount Athos, dated from around 1657. (Vladimir Lossky notes other such representations in his commentary on the Dormition, *The Meaning of Icons*, Boston, 1969, p. 215.) Should we conclude that this dual theme, depicting both the Dormition and the Assumption of the Mother of God, is simply the result of Western influence?

In fact, whether we label it the "Assumption" or the "Ascension" of the Theotokos, this image complements that of the *koimesis* in a way that is in perfect accord with Orthodox theology. Just as Christ died and lay in the tomb, to be resurrected and exalted into heaven, so His Holy Mother "falls asleep," to be raised up by her Son and exalted with Him into heaven. By His Resurrection and Ascension, He provides the means by which the "Mother of Life," together with all those who dwell in Him, can be raised from death and exalted to transcendent Life.

If we understand the "Assumption" of the Mother of God in the light of the Ascension of her divine Son, then we can appreciate the dual depiction of Dormition and Ascension found in many of our

Orthodox icons. The Holy Mother of God, the Theotokos or “God-bearer,” is the first fruits of the eschatological fulfillment that will bring all of God’s creative and redeeming work to a close. She is the vessel in which the Second Person of the Holy Trinity “took flesh” and became (a) man, in order to bestow salvation on the human race. Her womb, “more spacious than the heavens,” contained the uncontainable One. He drew his human existence from her, and she accompanied Him with love and prayer throughout the time of His earthly ministry, even to the foot of the Cross. She shared His suffering to the full, bearing His crucifixion and death in the depths of her soul. Accordingly, she is the perfect image of the Church, the eternal communion of all those who live and die in Christ.

They, like her, will be raised in Him and exalted to the same glory to which He raised and transformed their fallen human nature. She is thus a forerunner of their salvation, a prophetic image of the glorified life that awaits all those who bear Christ in the inner depths of their being, as she bore Him within the depths of her womb.

Yet she is more than this. She is not only a model of the common destiny of Christian people. She also accompanies them at every step of their journey, offering them—offering us—her incessant prayer and love. In her falling asleep and in her exaltation to heaven, she “did not forsake the world,” but remains, as the liturgical hymns of the feast proclaim, the Mother of Life, who is “constant in prayer” and “our firm hope,” who by her prayers “delivers our souls from death!”

Glory to God for all things!