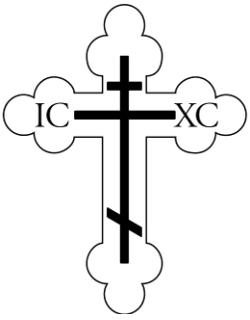
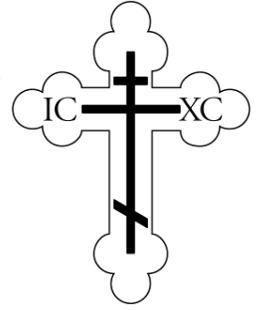


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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



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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

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

October 24, 2021 Holy Martyr Arethas and the Christian citizens of Najran

The Martyr Arethas and his subjects suffered for the Lord Jesus Christ in the sixth century. Arethas was prefect of the Christian city of Najran in Arabia. The Arabian (or Omirite) king, Dunaan, who was Jewish, decided to eliminate Christianity from the land. He issued an edict that all followers of Christ were to be put to death.

Because the inhabitants of Najran remained faithful to the Lord, Dunaan came with a large army to destroy the city. At the city walls of Najran the king's heralds announced that Dunaan would only spare those who renounced Christ and referred to His Cross as a "sign of malediction."

Not daring to assault the Christian city by force, Dunaan resorted to a ruse. Dunaan swore an oath that he would not force the Christians into Judaism, but would merely collect a tribute from

Najran. The inhabitants of the city would not heed the advice of St Arethas, and putting their trust in Dunaan, they opened the city gates.

The very next day Dunaan gave orders to light an immense fire and throw all the clergy of the city into it in order to frighten the rest of the Christians. 427 men were burned. He also threw the prefect Arethas and the other chief men into prison. Then the oppressor sent his messengers through the city to convert the Christians to Judaism. Dunaan himself conversed with those inhabitants brought from the prisons, saying, "I do not demand that you should renounce the God of heaven and earth, nor do I want you to worship idols, I want merely that you do not believe in Jesus Christ, since the Crucified One was a man, and not God."

The holy martyrs replied that Jesus is God the Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who for the salvation of mankind was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Those suffering said, "We shall not abjure Christ, since He is Life for us. To die for Him is to find Life."

More than four thousand Christians, men, women, both the aged and children, from the city of Najran and surrounding villages suffered martyrdom for Christ.

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 1 – Troparion for St. Arethas

Through the sufferings which Your holy martyrs Arethas and his companions endured for Your sake, O Lord, we beseech You, O Lover of ^mankind:://
“Heal all of our infirmities!”

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 4 – Kontakion for St. Arethas

Today the radiant feast of the passion-bearers Arethas and his companions comes to us as a herald of joy;//
as we celebrate it, we glorify the Lord on high.

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 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 32)

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

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9.6-11

Brethren: This I say: “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

Gospel: Luke 16.19-31

Jesus spoke this parable: “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

“So it was, that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

“But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

“Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’

“Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’

“And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

“But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Ev.Mem. John Gubaji ('22)

Anastasia Perstenok ('29)

Paul Hoha ('31)

George Petroff ('83)

Helen Sherman ('97)

Health & Salv.

Archpr. Peter

Archpr. Moses

Mat. Margaret

Mat. Anne

Mat. Trudi

Michal

Annika

Sarah

Archpr. Michael

Pr. Christopher

Mat. Jennifer

Andrew

Gideon

Dn. Nicholas

Sophia

Kevin

Jon

Tanya	Joseph	Janice
Jovan	Linda	Ken
Julia	Claudia	Debbie
Tom	Elizabeth	Jacqueline
Tina	Snezana	Cindy
Jennifer	Nathan	Daniel
Gail	Kara	Laura
Stacy	Christine	Dorothy
Jeramie	Jon	Vasiliy
Olivia	Zoey	William
Parker	Dominic	Wanda
Christine	Declan	Cindy
Larry	Hudson	Mary
Rollie	Ayden	Linda
Joseph	Hyland	Ivanka
Nadia	Jason	Susan
Brendan	Ted	Denise
Tanya	James	Valerie
Christopher	Pamela	Jeffrey
Nina	Erin	Aaron
Renee	Alexander	William
Carissa	Ronald	Jamie
Cynthia	Theodore	Karen
John	Robert	Dale
Olga	Craig	Jack
Mark	Chuck	Joyce
Jerry	Scott	Junia
Michael	Mark	Anna
Anthony	Christine	Sandra
Daryl	Dale	Linda
Diane	Pauline	Stephen
Carla	Mary	Megan
Susan	Timothy	Ryan
Timothy	Lisa	Carol
William	Lois	N.Ill. Emmalee
Paul	Michael	

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For **Bible Study** this Wednesday, read 4 Kingdoms (2 Kings) 15-18.

Next Sunday is the **feast of the Holy Priest-Martyr John of Chicago**, who founded Holy Trinity Cathedral in 1903. There will be **no Great Vespers at our parish this Saturday**. Instead, we have been invited to join Holy Trinity (1121 N. Leavitt St., Chicago, IL) for a presentation on the Life of St. John at 3:30pm, followed by Vigil at 5pm. Archbishop Paul will preside.

We will have special **fall activities and games** for the Sunday School kids next Sunday after Liturgy. We invite anyone interested to participate. There will be caramel apple decoration, fall crafts, and other goodies.

Mark your calendars:

Oct 27: **Bible Study @ 7pm**

Oct 30: **No Great Vespers**

Vigil for St. John of Chicago at Holy Trinity Cathedral @ 5pm

Oct 31: **Sunday School Fall party** after Divine Liturgy

Nov 15: **First Day of Advent**

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$2,771

Address of our Chancellor, Fr. Paul Jannakos, to the 2021 Diocesan Assembly

This past February I accepted the invitation from His Eminence, Archbishop PAUL to become the new chancellor of the Diocese, following in the footsteps of the Archpriest John Zdinak, whose long and faithful ministry produced much good fruit. I am humbled by this new position in the life of the Church and am grateful to both the Archbishop and Fr. Zdinak for their continued support as “I learn the ropes.”

Besides the usual work of the chancellor in assisting the Archbishop in his oversight of the diocese and the work of the diocesan deans, we have begun the task of implementing the two strategic plan initiatives identified by the Diocesan Council at their yearly retreat last January. These initiatives touch on the interrelated aspects of the life of the clergy and laity in our parishes.

The clergy initiative is to focus on the need for ongoing *priestly formation and development*. For, on the one hand, while it is clear that the Orthodox Church in America has several very fine graduate

level seminaries to prepare and educate young men for service in the Church as priests, it is not as clear how well our Church has done in its overall expectation of how parish priests should continue being educated and trained as pastors. A mandate of the 16th All-American Council that took place in Seattle at the end of October 2011 was unanimously passed requiring all clergy in the OCA to participate in the many classes, forums, retreats on pastoral life that are available by our seminaries, dioceses etc. Since then, there has also been the establishment of the very fine “Thriving in Ministry” (TIM) small group program for pastors and their wives led by Fr. Nicholas Solak.

Yet, in its assessment of the things that are most needful at the January 2021 retreat, our Diocesan Council decided that more attention should be given by the diocese to assist its clergy in ongoing learning and growth in a wide-range of pastoral skills such as teaching, preaching, leadership development, communications (both online and offline), administrative skills, the pastoral guidance of the faithful in confession (and in the office), conflict management and resolution, just to name a few. In addition to this, it is hoped that a two-way pastoral mentoring project will be created so that young priests might have the opportunity to learn from experienced priests and vice-versa, so that older priests who may be feeling “stuck” in their parish ministry might be given new and creative ideas from their younger peers. As such, a team of clergy has volunteered and is now working on the best way to author a means and method that will integrate both the academic and practical dimensions of this initiative.

The second initiative is for the laity of the diocese to become more fully engaged within the life of the Church by using their gifts and talents to strengthen and reinvigorate their local parishes. For while it is commonly known and accepted that one of the biggest indicators of parish health is the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual health of its priest, (“So goes the priest, so goes the parish”), the Orthodox Church in America has placed an emphasis also on the need to recover a more proper understanding of the role of the laity in the Church’s life. Even though the “higher ministries” will always be given their proper attention and honor, the many other ministries of the Church that belong uniquely to the laity should not and cannot be ignored. *“And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”* (Eph. 4:11).

To this end, a team of persons from the diocese has been diligently working on a plan to offer each of our parishes a platform through which a more robust challenge can be directed to our laity to become more thoroughly engaged with the life of the parish. Once again, the point of emphasis here is not to force upon ourselves just one more “religious program” that is extrinsic to the sacred ethos of Orthodoxy, but to affect the opposite, that is, to see how the Church’s worship and sacraments necessitate intentional lay engagement in ministry. So, using a working model from Bill Marianes and the “Stewardship Calling” ministry, the lay initiative team has set as their goal “to develop and implement an effective laity engagement platform in at least 17 parishes within 24 months.” This project includes a set of designated lead measures that will be assessed before and after implementation to help ensure the longevity of the work. The lead measures chosen so far are the following:

1. Liturgy & Sacraments - “First things first: Attendance - Sundays & Feast-days, etc.”
2. Stewardship – “Money matters...”
3. Ministry - “Participation in the work of the Church/Christ”
4. Fellowship - “The parish as a spiritual/surrogate family, support, etc.”
5. Personal Growth - “Growth in faith & knowledge, employment of talents.”
6. Parish Vision - “Parish members know and “buy-in” to its vision.”

To date, many hours of work by this laity engagement team have been committed to the formulation of this initiative so that it might, in the end, address the genuine needs of our parishes and find creative solutions to assist in fulfilling these needs. This is no small task in that our diocesan makeup is extremely diverse: some parishes are urban, some suburban, some rural (or even semi-rural), some are older, some younger, some larger, some smaller, some stable, some unstable, some are flourishing, some are maintaining what they have, some are dying. Despite these challenges, let us pray that both initiatives be blessed by God so that our diocese may truly continue to thrive and grow.

Archpriest Paul Jannakos

Rector, St. Luke Orthodox Church, Palos Hills

Chancellor, Diocese of the Midwest