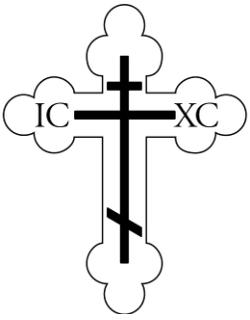
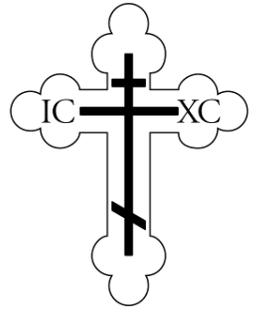


Protection of the Virgin Mary

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.

December 19, 2021

Sunday before Nativity

On the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, we have been taught by our holy Fathers to make commemoration of all those who from the beginning of time have been well-pleasing to God, from Adam even to Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist has recounted; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially of Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the aforementioned names, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ's lineage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ truly became a man, taking on human nature.

He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly, but like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been well-pleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways, in flesh and blood, in mind and soul, and in heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ’s human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us the way in which we can avoid sin, and so improve and transform our human nature.

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 2 – Troparion of the Holy Fathers

Great are the accomplishments of faith,
for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though
in the waters of rest;

and the Prophet Daniel appeared
a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep.//

So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

Tone 6 – Kontakion of the Holy Fathers

You did not worship the graven image,
O thrice-blessed ones,
but armed with the immaterial Essence of God,
you were glorified in a trial by fire.

From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying:
“Hasten, O compassionate One!

Speedily come to our aid,//

for You are merciful and able to do as You will!”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 4 – Prokeimenon of the Holy Forefathers (Daniel 3)

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers,
and praised and glorified is Your Name forever!

Epistle: Hebrews 11.9-10, 17-23, 32-40 (Sunday before Nativity)

Brethren: It was by faith that Abraham dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise; for he awaited the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; the receiver of the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," determining that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not receiving deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others were tried by mocking and scourging, yes, and by chains and imprisonment. They were stoned; they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, because God had provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Gospel: Matthew 1.1-25 (Sunday before Nativity)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, desired to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

So, all this was done that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'" Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

New Dep. Presv. Tulla Poteres
Michael Heady
Selma Zorka
Penny Hall

Ev.Mem. Militsa Yasen ('12)
Michael Barsukov ('25)
Anna Redka ('29)
William Frentzko ('59)

Health & Salv.
Archpr. Peter
Archpr. Moses
Archpr. Theodore
Mat. Margaret
Mat. Anne
Mat. Trudi
Michal
Annika
Sarah
Archpr. Michael
Pr. Christopher
Mat. Jennifer
Andrew
Gideon
Dn. Nicholas
Sophia
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
Janie
Michael
David
Sharon
Mark
Jerry
Michael
Anthony
Daryl
Diane
Carla
Susan
Timothy
William
Paul
Joseph
Linda
Claudia
Elizabeth
Carol
Snezana
Ryan
Nathan
Kara
Christine
Jon

Zoey
Dominic
Declan
Hudson
Ayden
Hyland
Jason
Ted
James
Pamela
Erin
Alexander
Ronald
Theodore
Robert
Craig
Chuck
Scott
Mark
Christine
Dale
Pauline
Mary
Timothy
Lisa
Lois
Michael
Janice
Ken
Debbie
Jacqueline
Cindy
Daniel
Laura
Dorothy

Vasiliy	Karen	Martha
William	Dale	Mark
Wanda	Jack	Michelle
Cindy	Joyce	Irene
Mary	Junia	Diane
Linda	Anna	Justin
Ivanka	Sandra	Robert
Susan	Linda	Rebecca
Denise	Stephen	Robert
Valerie	Megan	April
Jeffrey	William	Margaret
Aaron	Jim	Kiersten
William	Camille	Steven
Jamie	John	Brenda

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is the final week of **Advent** to prepare to receive the new-born Christ through added **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving**. It is also a season appropriate for making a **confession**.

2022 Church Calendars are available in the Narthex.

For **Bible Study** this week, read **Daniel 4-6**.

Your **flower donation** will help us fill the Church with poinsettias as usual for the services of Nativity. Parishioners are also always invited to bring in their own flowers to help beautify the Church on feast days.

On Sunday, January 2, after Divine Liturgy we will have our **annual Christmas potluck**. The Church school will lead us in singing carols.

Mark your calendars:

Dec 22: **Bible Study @ 7pm**

Dec 24: **Vespereal Liturgy of the Nativity of Christ @ 10am**
Vigil of the Nativity of Christ @ 6pm

Dec 25: **Festal Divine Liturgy of Nativity @ 9am**
No evening Great Vespers

Dec 31: **Great Vespers for the Circumcision of Christ @ 6pm**

Jan 1: **Divine Liturgy for the Circumcision of Christ @ 10am**

Jan 2: **Christmas Potluck and caroling** after Divine Liturgy

Jan 5: **Vespers of Theophany with the Blessing of Water @ 6pm**

Jan 6: **Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Theophany @ 10am**

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$3,360

2021 Nativity Message

of his Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

I greet you all today on this Great Feast of our illumination. At the Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great for this Feast we sing:

When the Lord Jesus was born of the holy virgin, the whole universe was filled with light. The shepherds watched in the fields. The wise men worshiped and the angels sang. But Herod was troubled, for God had appeared in the flesh. He is the Savior of our souls! (Third Sticheron at "Lord, I Call")

The Lord's entry into the world invites us all to pursue this spiritual illumination, which is Christ, the Wisdom of God Himself. In the Gospel we read of the shepherds who leave their pastures to find the Infant Christ. Likewise, Magi, the wise men from the East, traveled in pursuit of true Wisdom, which they found lying in a manger. They came at great cost and with great effort to worship Christ and offer their gifts to Him. In return, the darkness of their hearts was lifted, and they left, refusing to return to Herod, but instead "departed to their own country by another way" (Mt 2:12).

But we know that not everyone wants this light that our Lord offers. Herod did not. We remember that he also pursued the Wisdom of God. But instead of seeking illumination from Him, Herod sought His blood, preferring earthly power to heavenly blessings. His vision was too narrow to see that in trying to protect

his throne he was keeping himself in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and selfish ambition.

Seeing these examples before us, we need the light of Christ's Nativity in our world darkened with confusion, anxiety, and temptations. We might struggle to see this light in our suffering world, racked by a pandemic, and with societal changes coming at an alarming rate. We acutely feel the words of St. Paul: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:22-23).

Be encouraged! It is into our world, "groaning in travail," that our Deliverer is born. God in His love for mankind did not leave the world in darkness but came as its Savior. Even today Christ has "shone to the world the light of wisdom" (Nativity Troparion). We can see this light by unreservedly following the gospel and trading the earthly for the heavenly. Because of the light which shines from the cave this morning, the shadows of ignorance are dispelled and we are able to perceive the world as an object of God's eternal love. For Herod, Christ's Nativity brought anxiety and a troubled heart. For us today, we are offered illumination and joy. Like the shepherds, Magi, and angels let us behold the Incarnation of the Son of God with reverence and pious hope, in full knowledge that the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:16) is born for our redemption.

With all the blessings of the Feast, I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Glory to God for all things!