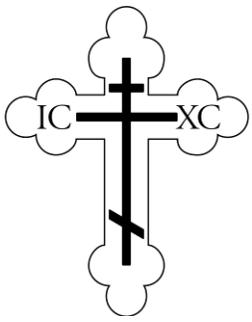


Protection of the Virgin Mary

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.

January 9, 2022

Afterfeast of Theophany

Holy Martyr Polyeuctus of Melitene

Saint Polyeuctos was the first to be martyred for Christ in the Armenian city of Melitene. He was a soldier during the reign of Emperor Decius (249-251), and he later suffered martyrdom in the reign of Valerian (253-259). He was a friend of Nearchos a fellow-soldier and a firm Christian. Polyeuktos, however, although he led a virtuous life, remained a pagan. When the persecution against Christians began, Nearchos said to him, "Friend, soon we shall be separated, for they will take me to torture, and you, alas, will renounce your friendship with me." Polyeuctos told him that he had seen Christ in a dream. The Savior took his soiled military cloak from him and dressed him in a radiant garment. "Now," he said, "I am prepared to serve the Lord Jesus Christ."

Enflamed with zeal, St Polyeuctos went to the city square, and tore up the edict of Decius which required everyone to worship the idols. A few moments later, he met a procession carrying twelve idols through the streets of the city. Dashing the idols to the ground, he trampled them underfoot. His father-in-law, the magistrate Felix, who was responsible for enforcing the imperial edict, was horrified at what St Polyeuctos had done and advised him to obey the imperial edict. Polyeuctos told him that we must obey God rather than men. Felix declared that Polyeuctos must die for this. "Go then, bid farewell to your wife and children," he said. Paulina wept and urged her husband to renounce Christ. Felix also wept, but St Polyeuctos remained steadfast in his resolve to suffer for Christ. Bowing his head beneath the executioner's sword, he was baptized in his own blood.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 4 – Resurrectional Troparion

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Your resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles:

"Death is overthrown!

Christ our God is risen, //

granting the world great mercy!"

Tone 1 – Troparion of Theophany

When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.

For the voice of the Father bore witness to You, and called You His beloved Son;

and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word.

O Christ our God, You have revealed Yourself // and have enlightened the world, glory to You.

Tone 4 – Troparion for St Polyeuctus

Your holy martyr Polyeuctus, O Lord, through his sufferings has received an incorruptible crown from You, our God.

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

Through his intercession, save our souls!

Tone 4 – Resurrectional Kontakion

My Savior and Redeemer, as God,
rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains.
He has shattered the gates of hell,
and as Master,//
He has risen on the third day!

Tone 4 – Kontakion of St Polyeuctus

When the Savior bowed His head in the Jordan,
the heads of the dragons were crushed;//
when Polyeuctus was beheaded, the deceiver was put to shame.

Tone 4 – Kontakion of Theophany

Today You have shone forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Your countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing You, we sing Your praises:
“You have come and revealed Yourself,//
O unapproachable Light.”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 1 – Prokeimenon for the Afterfeast (Psalm 32)

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

Epistle: Ephesians 4.7-13 (Sunday after Theophany)

Brethren: To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. For this reason, the Scripture says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” Now this, “He ascended” – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Gospel: Matthew 4.12-17 (Sunday after Theophany)

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

New Dep. Thomas Reibly

Presv. Tulla Poteres

Michael Heady

Selma Zorka

Ev.Mem. Melania Nereh ('16)

Joachim Manev ('17)

Juliana Shannon ('22)

Leon Kovalchuk ('28)

Stephan Markovich ('45)

Adam Richie ('50)

Fannie Kornafel ('54)

Stephan Koleff ('56)

Nicholas Kuchta ('58)

John Skirpan ('61)

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	Christine	William
Claudia	Dale	Jamie
Elizabeth	Pauline	Karen
Carol	Mary	Dale
Snezana	Timothy	Jack
Ryan	Lisa	Joyce
Nathan	Lois	Anna
Kara	Michael	Sandra
Christine	Janice	Linda
Jon	Ken	Stephen
Zoey	Debbie	Megan
Dominic	Jacqueline	William
Declan	Cindy	Jim
Hudson	Daniel	Camille
Ayden	Laura	John
Hyland	Dorothy	Martha
Jason	Vasiliy	Mark
Ted	William	Michelle
James	Wanda	Irene
Pamela	Cindy	Robert
Alexander	Mary	Rebecca
Ronald	Linda	Robert
Theodore	Ivanka	April
Robert	Susan	Margaret
Craig	Denise	Kiersten
Chuck	Valerie	Brian
Scott	Jeffrey	Victoria
Mark	Aaron	Michelle

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

Instead of *"It is Truly Meet..."* we sing:

Magnify, O my soul, the most-pure Virgin Theotokos,
 more honorable than the heavenly hosts.
 No tongue knows how to praise you worthily, O Theotokos;
 even Angels are overcome with awe praising you.
 But since you are good, accept our faith;
 for you know our love inspired by God.
 You are the defender of Christians, and we magnify you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After Divine Liturgy we have our **annual Christmas potluck**. The Church school will lead us in singing carols.

For **Bible Study** this week, read **Habakkuk 1-3**.

Every year at this time, **Orthodox Christian homes are blessed with the new holy water of Theophany**. Make an appointment with Fr Jacob to have your home blessed. Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex. The Church teaches us to sanctify everything: dwellings, places of work, all our pursuits, and the fruits of our labor. The home blessing at Theophany represents a renewal of our lives in Christ. Washed in the baptismal waters, our homes become temples of the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of the will of our Heavenly Father. This is why the Church blesses everything that can be found in a Christian home; and if something is not worthy of being blessed, then there should not be a place for it in the home of a Christian.

Here is how to prepare for your house blessing: All who reside in the household should make every effort to be present for the Blessing. We gather in the dining room. On your dining room table or family icon corner, set 1) A lit candle, 2) An icon of Christ, and 3) A list of the names of family members living and departed you wish to pray for. Also please remember to turn off any televisions or other noisy electronics. When the priest arrives everyone in the house should gather around the table/family altar and join in prayer and singing. If there are children, they usually carry the icon and a candle to lead the priest from room to room. If not, the head of the household will lead the priest. After the blessing, we all gather back around the icon for the concluding prayers.

It is time again for the various committees and ministries to get your **annual reports** in for the parish meeting. Reports must be submitted either to Fr Jacob or to Council President Melody Rozdelsky no later than January 15. The annual meeting will be February 13.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon has designated Sunday, January 16, as **Sanctity of Life Sunday** to be observed in parishes of the Orthodox Church in America and has released the statement below. It will be a precursor to the March for Life on January 21, on the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade ruling legalizing abortion across the United States.

Yesterday, we discovered the source of the theft announced some weeks ago. It was our hired cleaning person, and so we have had to let them go. If anyone has a recommendation for a trusted cleaner, please let parish leadership know.

Mark your calendars:

Jan 12: **Bible Study @ 7pm**

Jan 15: **Annual Reports** due for parish meeting on Feb 13

Jan 21: **Blood Drive** at St. Mary's Hall @ 12-6pm

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

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

Last two weeks' gifts to the Lord: \$4,452

2022 Sanctity of Life Message

of his Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon

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

Dear Beloved Children in the Lord,

As we witness our society becoming increasingly polarized and divided, we approach the anniversary of one of the most bitter of these divisions: the legalization of abortion in the United States of America. We grieve on this anniversary for the many lives cut short, the emotional and psychological devastation done to so many women, the numerous wounded families, and the persistent hostility embittering our society.

The Orthodox Church continues to hold fast to its ancient belief that all human life, from conception in the womb to our very last moment, is sacred to God. For the Holy Scripture tells us that "God did not make death, and He does not delight in the death of the living. For He created all things that they might exist" (Wis 1:13-14). So we say, humbly but firmly, that the willful destruction of a person in the womb is an evil act and a rejection of a gift of God.

For Orthodox Christians, the darkness of abortion transcends the political. It extends even beyond morality and ethics. It cuts to the heart of our faith in the Resurrection. On that bright morning of

Great and Holy Pascha, Christ forever destroyed death, the last enemy of mankind (cf. 1 Cor 15:26). The empty tomb ennobles humanity and transforms us into a people forever dedicated to life, utterly opposed to death in all its forms. All people, even those still unborn, are created for eternity with God, and it is our unshakable conviction in the Risen Christ which makes the thought of the termination of a child unimaginable.

We also know that the unequivocal message of the New Testament is that followers of Christ are to “love one another” with the same self-sacrifice with which Christ loved us (cf. Jn 13:34). I encourage all Orthodox Christians to show that Christ-like, self-sacrificial love in the face of this darkness. I ask that we assist mothers in every way possible to relieve them of the temptation to abortion. Likewise, support the fathers as they step up to embrace their new and blessed family responsibility.

As we “speak the truth in love” (Eph 4:15) we must not condemn others but leave judgment to the Lord. Our call is a call to repentance, beginning with ourselves, so that we might restore the likeness of God and become bright mirrors reflecting the light of Christ to a wounded, confused, and anxious people. Let the only thing that our society sees in us be overflowing love, piety, and forgiveness to all. We remember with gratitude that the Lord always gives us, personally and as a nation, a path out of our sin through repentance—even sin as devastating and horrific as abortion. Let our parishes and communities become beacons of that divine love and forgiveness, where all human life is valued as deeply as Christ values it, as we forever speak with a Paschal voice: “Christ is risen and life reigns.”

May the Holy Spirit, whom we confess in the Creed as “the Lord, the Giver of life,” ever inspire us with love, humility, and conviction as we speak to this issue.

Yours in Christ,

+Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Glory to God for all things!