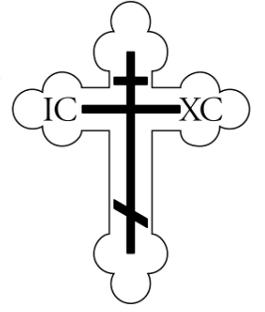
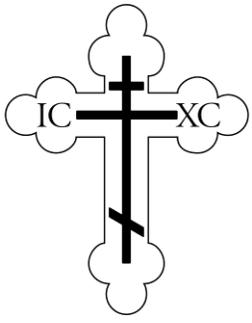


# Protection of the Virgin Mary

## Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago  
and the Midwest  
Orthodox Church  
in America

8600 Grand Blvd.  
Merrillville, IN 46410  
(219)947-4748  
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.**

# December 11, 2022

## Sunday of the Holy Forefathers of Christ

Two Sundays before the celebration of Christmas, the Orthodox Church rejoices in the festival of the Holy Forefathers of the Old Covenant, including those who came before the giving of the Law. They foretold the coming of the Messiah and are redeemed by his saving Pascha. Together with the Canon of the Nativity of Christ, the following hymns are sung at the services of the day:

Let us offer praise to the fathers  
Who shone forth before and during the Law;  
With righteous minds they served the Lord and Master  
Who shone forth from the Virgin,  
And now they delight in the unending Light.

There is a great difference between “existing” and “living.” Many people exist. Very few really live. Only those who seek God have life. Only those who delight in His commandments and rejoice in accomplishing His will pass beyond mere existence and actually find life. "Seek God, and your soul shall live" (Ps 69:32). This is the cry of the psalmist David who is especially hymned on this Sunday and on the Sunday after Christmas. His exhortation is in harmony with the words of God given to Moses in His revelation of the divine Law:

“See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you... I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore, choose life, that you and your descendants may live.” (Deut 30:15-19)

The holy forefathers and mothers, together with all their descendants, have chosen life. They find it in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is Life itself, God's incarnate Word. The celebration of the Winter Pascha is a celebration of Life in God's Word. For "Christ who is our life" has already appeared (Col 3:4). We have "beheld His glory" (Jn 1:14). Now that glory is hidden in the "form of a slave" (Phil 2:7), but it will be revealed at the end of the ages in power for those who "have loved His appearing" and "live in Him" (2 Tim 4:8; Col 2:6).

## 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 Forefathers**

Through faith You justified the Forefathers,  
betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles.  
These saints exult in glory,  
for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:  
she who bore You without seed.//  
So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

## **Tone 1 – Resurrectional Kontakion**

When Gabriel announced to you, O Virgin, “Rejoice!”  
with that word the Master of all was incarnate in you, O holy Ark.  
As the righteous David said,  
your womb became more spacious than the heavens, bearing your Creator.  
Glory to Him Who took abode in you!  
Glory to Him Who came <sup>^</sup>from you!//  
Glory to Him Who freed us by being born of you!

## **Tone 6 – Kontakion of the Holy Forefathers**

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: Colossians 3.4-11 (Forefathers)**

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things, in which you once walked when you lived in them, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. But now you must put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language from your mouth; do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man

with its deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

### **Gospel: Luke 14.16-24 (Forefathers)**

Jesus spoke this parable saying, "A certain man gave a great supper, and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

"But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to examine them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

"So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.'

"And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"

## **WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**New. Dep.** Thomas Martin

Donna Chabre

Jimmy Grosdanis

Hanna Kostyuk

**Ev.Mem.** Anna Romanenko ('22)

Eva Baus ('30)

John Fedkevich ('38)

Solomonina Sadownik ('38)

Stephanida Belkow ('67)

Moisa Stefan ('69)

Stephan Markovich ('69)

Alexandra Rocoff ('87)

Alexsander Niedbajlik ('99)

**Health & Salv.**

Archpr. Peter

Mat. Cynthia

Archpr. John

Mat. Anne

Dn. Nicholas

Kevin

Jon

Tanya

Jovan

Tom

Jennifer

Larry

Rollie

Joseph

Nadia

Mark

Jerry

Joseph

Linda

Claudia

Carol

Snezana

Ryan

Nathan	Erika	Duane
Kara	Luke	Elizabeth
Djuro	Jo	Karen
Dominic	Stephanie	Alexa
Declan	Mary Ann	Miriana
Hudson	Robb	Olga
Ayden	Desiree	Richard
Hyland	Jaroslava	Klaudia
Jason	Andrew	Nicodemus
Ted	Andrew	Nada
James	Vadim	Mark
Pamela	Hanna	Catherine
Alexander	Alex	Aaron
Ronald	Carl	Dale
William	Laura	Ebony
Wanda	Chrisan	Peggy
Ivanka	Janice	Sue
Aaron	Gerald	Victoria
Karen	Olga	Janet
Sandra	Janie	Tom
Linda	David	Wilma
Jim	Sharon	Jerry
John	Tanya	Penelope
Martha	Renee	Cora
Mark	Carissa	Brandi
Michelle	Ashton	Joyce
Irene	Doris	Paul
Michelle	Laura	N.Ill. John

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

### **Special Petitions at the Augmented Litany:**

We pray, O Lord our God, for all those who suffer from acts of war, especially for the victims in Ukraine. We pray for Your peace and Your mercy in the midst of the great suffering of Your people. Vouchsafe to accept the prayers of the Church, so that by Your goodness, peace may return to all peoples; O Lord, hear us and have mercy.

We also pray You, O Lord our God, to remember and have mercy on our Orthodox brothers and sisters in Russia and Ukraine, who are

involved in violent conflict. Remove from their midst all hostility, confusion and hatred. Lead everyone along the path of reconciliation and peace, we pray You, hear us and have mercy.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank you** to our Church School teachers and families for another excellent **St. Nicholas celebration** yesterday. And to all those who helped **decorate our church for Nativity**.

For **Bible Study** tomorrow night, read **Wisdom of Solomon 8-11**.

During this season of Advent, we rededicate ourselves to **prayer**, especially by making a **confession**, we keep the **fast**, and we find opportunities to **give alms to those in need**. This Sunday's special collection is for the **Alaskan Native Rural Clergy Stipend Endowment**. For more information, see Archbishop Alexei's message below.

During coffee hour, the **Ladies' Sodality** will sell hand-made Christmas bows for wrapping or decorating. \$5 each or 3/\$10.

This Saturday our Hall and parking lot will host a **Holiday Food Market** 10am - 4pm. There will be vendors from around the region, as well as hot apple cider served by volunteers from our parish.

While holiday shopping, you can help support our parish by **ordering gift cards** through the **Scrip** program (find Lara Richards' table during coffee hour). And if you do any shopping through Amazon, if you begin at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and select "Protection of the Virgin Mary Church" as your charity of choice, a small percentage of every purchase also comes back to PTVM.

### Mark your calendars:

Dec 10: Church School **St. Nicholas Celebration and Church Decorating @ 9am**

Dec 13: **Divine Liturgy for the feast of St. Herman of Alaska** at St. Elizabeth's in Chesterton @ 10am

Dec 15: **Faith Enrichment @ 10am**

Dec 17: **Holiday Market, 10am-4pm**

Dec 23: **Royal Hours of Nativity @ 10am**

**Dec 24: Great Vespers for the Nativity of our Lord @1pm  
Vigil for the Nativity of our Lord @ 6pm**

**Dec 25: No coffee hour (Christmas Day)**

**Jan 1: Annual Parish Christmas potluck after Divine Liturgy**

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

**Jan 6: Divine Liturgy for Theophany @ 10am**

**Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$1,801**

# **Appeal from His Grace Alexei Bishop of Sitka and Alaska**

Christ is in our midst!

At the 2022 All-American Council, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon graciously gave me the blessing to make a presentation on behalf of the good Orthodox native peoples of Alaska. I spoke at length about their heroic and often heart-breaking struggles to be faithful to the Orthodox faith in the face of physical and emotional abuse from heterodox missionaries and a government not supportive of their culture and “foreign” religion, our common Orthodox faith. I referred to the difficulties of the faithful remaining Orthodox in communities who not only have no priest to serve the liturgy or hear their confessions, but who also face pressures from protestant pastors who prey on our native peoples and disparage their faith. I also spoke about the conditions of my clergy whose salaries are \$26,000 below the poverty line for a family of four in Alaska. And about these conditions, I seek your help.

Through the generosity of your parish and your parishioners, we can begin to change this situation by your assistance in establishing the Alaskan Native Rural Clergy Stipend Endowment. By conservative estimates, we can provide our Alaskan rural priests with an additional \$80/month from the interest of a one-million-dollar endowment. That may not seem like a very large increase, but for a priest with a \$7,200/year stipend, it is a 13% increase, raising his stipend to \$8,160/year. This is more than tithe, a tithe that your parish can offer to America's “poor Saints in Jerusalem,” to the land through which Orthodox sanctity first reached our shores.

If every parish and community in the Orthodox Church in America would pledge \$100/month for two years, we will be able to establish the Clergy Stipend Endowment. Alternatively, it can be established if each parish could simply locate twelve donors to offer a one-hundred-dollar donation once a year for two years. His Beatitude has already personally pledged \$10,000 a year to help this fund be established. In practical terms, this supplement will enable your parish to provide a warm coat for a child, a little more heating fuel for a warm home in below freezing weather, or just some store-bought food on the table. I was told that a Yupik parent told his child who expressed the desire to be a priest, "Son, you'll be poor your entire life. I don't want to see you destitute." Establishing this fund is a response, a clear response, that our Church strives to take care of her own.

I ask that you share this information with your parish and your parish council. If you have parishioners who desire to give alms for themselves or their loved ones, please share it with them as well. Please help these your brothers and these your sisters, living lives that would be hard for many of us to imagine. Their parishioners offer what they can, but most villagers are unemployed and struggle themselves with poverty. Help and they will be sincerely grateful. Help and their children will be grateful for milk on the table. Our Lord is asking your help in the persons of these priests and our Lord will bless you accordingly for helping Him feed and clothe those in need.

I am asking for your help with the Clergy Stipend Endowment. If your parish is willing to pledge to the Clergy Endowment Fund for rural Alaskan native clergy and has not yet done so, please respond to this email. If your parish has already done so, be assured of our gratitude for the bond of love with which your gift now binds your parish to the first peoples of Alaska.

May God bless you richly for your kindness and generosity to those in need.

Gratefully Yours in Christ,

+ALEXEI

Bishop of Sitka and Alaska

**Glory to God for all things!**