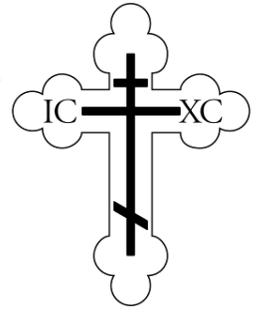
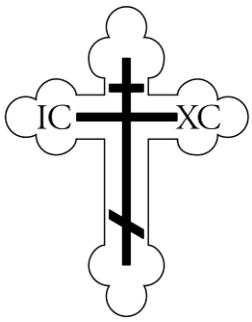


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America

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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.

February 19, 2023

Sunday of the Last Judgment

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins.

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge,

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God’s mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Fr Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book *Great Lent* (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ’s brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 3 – Resurrectional Troparion

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

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 – Kontakion for the Last Judgment

When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory,
all things shall tremble,
and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat;
the books shall be opened, and the hidden things disclosed;
then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, //
and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand, O Righteous Judge!

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 3 – Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 146)

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power,
His understanding is beyond measure!

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8.8 – 9.2

Brethren: Food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord. If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 25.31-46

The Lord said to His disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his

sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

New. Dep. David May
Ratka Traycoff
Thomas Mosak
Bp. Tikhon Fitzgerald
Terry Tutterow

Ev.Mem. Ignaty Lucas ('53)
Yakim Shocaroff ('69)
John Gruszyk ('99)
Anna Vahary (2019)

Health & Salv.
Archpr. Peter
Mat. Cynthia
Archpr. John
Pr. Patrick
Mat. Anne

Dn. Nicholas
Kevin
Jon
Tanya
Jovan
Tom

Jennifer
Rollie
Joseph
Nadia
Joseph
Linda

Claudia	Erika	Alexa
Carol	Luke	Miriana
Snezana	Jo	Olga
Ryan	Stephanie	Richard
Nathan	Mary Ann	Klaudia
Kara	Robb	Nicodemus
Djuro	Desiree	Nada
Paula	Jaroslava	Mark
Christopher	Andrew	Catherine
Karen	Andrew	Aaron
Dominic	Vadim	Dale
Declan	Hanna	Ebony
Hudson	Alex	Peggy
Ayden	Carl	Sue
Hyland	Laura	Victoria
Jason	Chrisan	Janet
Ted	Gerald	Tom
James	Olga	Wilma
Pamela	Janie	Jerry
Alexander	Sharon	Penelope
Ronald	Tanya	Cora
Ivanka	Renee	Brandi
Karen	Michael	Joyce
Sandra	Chris	Paul
Linda	Nina	Galina
Jim	Carissa	Helen
John	Ashton	Kathleen
Martha	Doris	Rachel
Mark	Laura	Martha
Michelle	Duane	Stephanie
Irene	Elizabeth	
Michelle	Karen	

*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.

Parish Council Installation

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, following the singing of “Blessed be the name of the Lord...” twice, the elected members of the Council assemble in the center of the church, where the Holy Gospel and Precious Cross are placed on a table. Together, the Council members say the following:

Having been elected to the Parish Council of Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church, we hereby solemnly promise to Almighty God, before His Holy Gospel and Life-creating Cross, that we will zealously, honestly, voluntarily, and with diligence and the fear of God, fulfill the duties of our office according to the Holy Tradition of the Church, the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, and the by-laws of this parish, not for personal interest, but to the glory of God, the welfare of His Holy Church, and eternal salvation, remembering that for all of this we will give an answer before the Judgment Seat of Christ. We promise to look after the cleanliness and adornment of the holy temple, and to uphold the pursuit of peace, tranquility, and Christian love among the brethren of this parish community. In witness of this, my solemn promise, I kiss the Holy Gospel and Life-creating Cross of our Lord God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Council members now severally kiss the Gospel and the Cross, they receive the blessing of the Rector, then sign their names to the Parish Council Confirmation Form to be submitted to the chancery office. The choir sing, “Blessed be the name of the Lord...” for the third time, and the Liturgy concludes in the usual manner.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After venerating the cross, we will serve a **memorial for the newly departed David May**, as well as the 4-year memorial for **Anne Vahary** and the 24-year memorial for **John Gruszyk**.

For **Bible Study** tomorrow night, the last before Pascha, please read the prophets **Zephaniah and Haggai** (five chapters in total).

Faith Enrichment will also meet this Thursday for the last time before Pascha. During Great Lent, we will have **fellowship potlucks** after the Friday morning Presanctified Liturgies.

With the start of Great Lent, **house blessing season** is coming to a close. If anyone would still like their house blessed this year, **please contact Fr. Jacob to make an appointment ASAP.**

Mark your calendars:

Feb 20: Bible Study @ 7pm

Feb 21: Parish Council @ 7pm

Feb 23: Faith Enrichment @ 10am
Women's Book Group @ 6pm

Feb 26: Forgiveness Vespers @ 1pm

Feb 27: Clean Monday (Great Lent begins)

Feb 27 – Mar 2: Great Canon of St Andrew in four parts, 6pm nightly

Mar 1: Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 10am; optional potluck after

Mar 3: Presanctified Divine Liturgy @ 10am; optional potluck after

Mar 24: Blood Drive 12pm-5pm

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$1,803

Simple Guidelines for Great Lent

From the OCA Department of Religious Education

When seeking practical advice concerning Lenten practices, the only realistic guideline is to do what you can. You know that the essentials are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Intensify your prayer. Fast as fully as possible. Give to others, asking nothing in return. Know that all of your fasting, praying, and almsgiving must be exercised in secret. The only real goal and purpose of Great Lent is to enter into a deeper love for God and for those around us. Here are some concrete guidelines for taking Great Lent more seriously:

- Turn off the television, radio, and stereo for the entire Lenten season, except for edifying or educational programs.

- Do not visit or engage in outside activities for their own sake. Keep useless talking to a minimum. Do only necessary business, good works, and acts of charity.
- Examine and measure every aspect of your life—family, work, society, politics, economics, values, and desires—against the model set forth by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.
- Question yourself in regard to love, truth, honest, purity, humility, peace, forgiveness, justice, mercy, hungering and thirsting for God, wisdom, and knowledge.
- In the name of Jesus Christ, forgive all who have offended you and seek forgiveness from those whom you have offended. If it will not be embarrassing or misinterpreted as an act of self-righteousness, express yourself as concretely as possible. Visit, make a phone call, and so forth.
- Set aside and give a sizeable portion of your resources to others: the parish, the poor, a social or educational agency. Tell no one what you have done.
- Fast strictly at all times. Eat no meat, as the basic minimum. Suit your fast to your work, but avoid luxury. Again, tell no one. Do not advertise or discuss your fasting with anyone and avoid judging others who may not be fasting with you.
- Pray at home at least at one fixed time each day. Choose a brief rule of prayer, but keep it faithfully.
- Read the scriptures in the same brief, yet regular way. You may wish to follow the Church's calendar, read a chapter of a given book on a daily basis, or simply read and reflect upon passages which you happen upon.
- Be faithful to Christ's gospel in every word, action, and thought—even the smallest or most insignificant.
- Participate in the services, especially the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Saturday evening Great Vespers, and the Sunday Divine Liturgy, confessing seriously and receiving Holy Communion frequently.

Glory to God for all things!