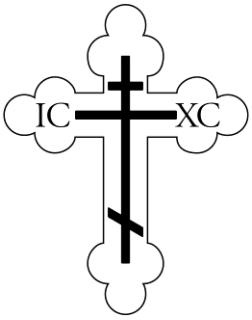


# Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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](mailto: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.**

## May 7, 2023

# Sunday of the Paralytic Holy Confessor Alexis Toth

Our holy Father Alexis was born in Austro-Hungary on March 18, 1854 into a poor Carpatho-Russian family. Like many others in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Toths were Eastern Rite Catholics. Alexis' father and brother were priests and his uncle was a bishop in the Uniate church. He married Rosalie Mihalich, a priest's daughter, and was ordained on April 18, 1878 to serve as second priest in a Uniate parish. His wife died soon afterwards, followed by their only child—losses which the saint endured with the patience of Job. In May, 1879, Father Alexis was appointed secretary to the Bishop of Presov. He was also entrusted with the directorship of an orphanage. At Presov Seminary, Father Toth taught Church History and Canon Law.

Then, in October, 1889 he was appointed to serve as pastor of a Uniate parish in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Upon his arrival in America, Father Alexis presented himself to the local Roman Catholic diocesan authority, Archbishop John Ireland, since there was no Uniate bishop in America at that time. Archbishop Ireland belonged to the party of American Catholics who favored the “Americanization” of all Roman Catholics. Naturally, ethnic parishes and non-Latin rite clergy did not fit into this vision. Thus, when Father Toth came to present his credentials, Archbishop Ireland greeted him with open hostility. He refused to recognize him as a legitimate Catholic priest or to grant permission for him to serve in his diocese. Shortly thereafter, the American bishops wrote to Rome demanding the recall to Europe of all Uniate priests in America, fearing that Uniate priests and parishes would hinder the assimilation of immigrants into American culture.

Archbishop Ireland sent a letter to his parishes ordering their members not to attend Father Toth’s parish nor to accept any priestly ministrations from him. Expecting imminent deportation, Father Toth explained the situation to his parishioners and suggested it might be best for him to leave and return to Europe.

His flock refused and decided to write to the Russian consul in San Francisco to ask for the name and address of the Russian bishop. Ivan Milnar went to San Francisco to make initial contact with Bishop Vladimir; then in February, 1891 Father Toth and his church warden, Paul Podany, also made the journey. Subsequently, Bishop Vladimir came to Minneapolis and on March 25, 1891 received Father Toth and 361 parishioners into the Orthodox Church of their ancestors. This initiative came from the people themselves, and was not the result of any coercion from outsiders. The Russian Orthodox Church was unaware of the existence of these Slavic Uniate immigrants to America, but responded positively to their petition to be reunited to the Orthodox Church.

The example of St Alexis and his parish in returning to Orthodoxy was an encouragement to hundreds of other Uniates. Through his fearless preaching he uprooted the tares which had sprung up in the wheat of true doctrine, and exposed the false teachings which had led his people astray. Although he did not hesitate to point out errors in the doctrines of other denominations, he was careful to warn his flock against intolerance. His writings and sermons are filled with admonitions to respect other people and to refrain from attacking their faith.

Bishops Vladimir, Nicholas, St Tikhon, and Platon recognized the special gifts of Father Toth, so they often sent him forth to preach and teach wherever there were people of Slavic background. Even though he was aware of his shortcomings and inadequacies, yet he was obedient to the instructions of the bishops. He did not hesitate or make excuses, but went immediately to fulfill his mission. St Alexis visited many Uniate parishes, explaining the differences between Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism, stressing that the true way to salvation is in Orthodoxy.

He was instrumental in the formation or return of seventeen parishes, planting a vineyard of Christ in America, and increasing its fruitful yield many times over. By 1909, the time of his blessed repose, many thousands of Carpatho-Russian and Galician Uniates had returned to Orthodoxy. This was a major event in the history of the North American Mission, which would continue to shape the future of Orthodoxy in this country for many generations to come. Any future growth or success may truly be regarded as the result of Father Toth's apostolic labors.

Father Toth's efforts did not go unrecognized in his own lifetime. He received a jeweled miter from the Holy Synod, as well as the Order of St Vladimir and the Order of St Anna from Czar Nicholas II for distinguished service and devotion to God and country. In 1907, he was considered as a candidate for the episcopal office. He declined this honor, however, humbly pointing out that this responsibility should be given to a younger, healthier man. At the end of 1908, St Alexis' health began to decline, and he reposed on Friday, May 7, 1909. His holy relics now rest at St Tikhon Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania where the faithful may come to venerate them and to entreat Saint Alexis' intercessions on their behalf.

## 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 – Troparion for St Alexis**

O righteous Father Alexis,  
our heavenly intercessor and teacher,  
divine adornment of the Church of Christ,  
entreat the Master of All  
to strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America,  
to grant peace to the world//  
and to our souls great mercy!

### **Tone 5 – Kontakion for St. Alexis**

Let us, the faithful, praise the Priest Alexis,  
a bright beacon of Orthodoxy in America,  
a model of patience and humility,  
a worthy shepherd of the flock of Christ!  
He called back sheep who had been led astray  
and brought them by his preaching//  
to the Heavenly Kingdom.

### **Tone 3 – Kontakion for the Paralytic**

By Your divine intercession, O Lord,  
as You raised up the Paralytic of old,  
so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts;  
so that being saved I may sing to You://  
“Glory to Your power, O compassionate Christ!”

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **Tone 1 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 32)**

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

### **Tone 7 – Prokeimenon for St. Alexis (Psalm 63)**

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord / and shall hope in Him!

### **Epistle: Acts 9.32-42 (Sunday)**

Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and

charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

### **Galatians 1.11-19 (St. Alexis)**

Brethren: I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

### **Gospel: John 5.1-15 (Sunday)**

At that time, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.” He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’”

Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.

Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

### **John 10.1-9 (St. Alexis)**

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: “He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

## **WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**New. Dep.** Anne Springman

Foma Dimitroff ('33)

**Ev.Mem.** Gerta Lushkevich ('29)

Michael Chechovec ('61)

<b>Health &amp; Salv.</b>	Alexandra	Carissa
Archpr. Peter	Jonathan	Duane
Mat. Cynthia	Christine	Elizabeth
Archpr. John	Zoey	Olga
Pr. Gregory	Dominic	Klaudia
Pr. Patrick	Declan	Tom
Mat. Anne	Hudson	Diane
Mat. Catherine	Ronald	Brandi
Kevin	Mary Ann	Joyce
Jon	Dara	Galina
Tanya	Jaroslava	Thomas
Jovan	Andrew	Diane
Rollie	Andrew	Michael
Nadia	Vadim	Linda
Joseph	Hanna	Stephanie
Linda	Viktor	Nathan
Claudia	Gerald	Cindy
Carol	Christine	Nathaniel
Snezana	Olga	Tiffany
Ryan	Janie	Joanne
Nathan	Sharon	Tamara
Kara	Tanya	Dennis
Djuro	Renee	Maria
Paula	Michael	Elizabeth
Christopher	Chris	Jonah
Karen	Nina	Richard

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

### Special Petition at the Augmented Litany:

We pray, O Lord our God, for all those who suffer from acts of war, especially 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.

### Paschal Theotokion (*instead of It is Truly Meet...*)

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:  
 “Rejoice, rejoice O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice,  
 your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!  
 With Himself He has raised all the dead.”  
 Rejoice, rejoice O ye people!



Shine, shine, shine O new Jerusalem!  
The glory of the Lord has shone on you.  
Exult now, exult and be glad, O Zion!  
Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,  
in the Resurrection, the resurrection of your Son!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank you** to everyone who helped with our Spring outdoor clean-up yesterday.

There is **no Bible Study this week.**

The Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church **Jan Hughes Memorial Golf Outing** is scheduled for **Saturday, June 3**, at Indian Ridge Country Club in Hobart. This is a major fundraiser for us. Hole sponsors (\$125) or other monetary or prize donations will be greatly appreciated. Those wishing to help in any way (including making desserts or appetizers), or to purchase tickets, please see Rich Svihra, Nick Rozdelsky, or Lara Richards. Thanks in advance, The Golf Committee.

The **parish prayer list was refreshed.** Email Fr Jacob if a name should be added back.

### Mark your calendars:

May 11: **Women's Book Group @ 6pm**

May 20: **Annual clean-up of St. Mary's Cemetery @ 9am**

May 24: **Festal Vespers for Ascension @ 6pm**

May 25: **Divine Liturgy for Ascension @ 10am**

May 26: **Blood Drive 12pm - 6pm**

May 29: **Memorial Day Grave Blessings** starting at St. Mary's Cemetery @ 9am

June 3: **PTVM Golf Outing**

**Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$7,626**

# Glory to God for all things!