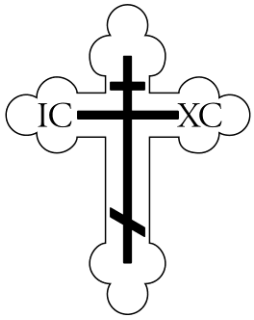
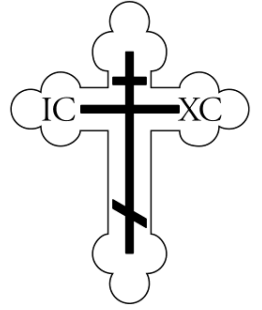


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America



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Merrillville, IN 46410
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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.

June 25, 2023

Afterfeast of the Nativity of St John the Forerunner

Holy Martyr Febronia of Nisibis

The Virgin Martyr Febronia suffered during the reign of Diocletian (284-305). She was raised at a monastery in the city of Sivapolis (Assyria). The head of the women's monastery was the abbess Bryaine, the aunt of Saint Febronia. Being concerned about her niece's salvation, she assigned her a stricter form of life than the other nuns. According to their monastic rule, on Fridays the sisters put aside their other duties and spent the whole day in prayer and the reading of Holy Scripture. The abbess usually assigned the reading to Saint Febronia.

News of her pious life spread throughout the city. The illustrious young widow Hieria, a pagan, began to visit her, and under the influence of her guidance and prayer she accepted holy Baptism, bringing her parents and kinsfolk to the Christian Faith.

Diocletian sent a detachment of soldiers to Assyria under the command of Lysimachus, Selinus and Primus for the destruction of Christians. Selenos, the uncle of Lysimachus, was noted for his fierce attitude against Christians, but Lysimachus was of a different frame of mind from him, since his mother had sought to inspire love for the Christian faith in her son, and she had died a Christian. Lysimachus had discussed with his kinsman Primus how it would be possible to deliver Christians from the hands of the torturer. When the detachment of soldiers approached the convent, its inhabitants hid. There remained only the abbess Bryaine, her helper Thomais and Saint Febronia, who was seriously ill at the time.

It grieved the abbess terribly that her niece might fall into the hands of the torturers, who might defile her. She prayed fervently that the Lord would preserve her and strengthen her in the confession of Christ the Savior. Selinus gave orders to bring him all the nuns of the convent. Primus with the detachment of soldiers found no one, except the two old women and Saint Febronia. He regretted that they had not hidden, and he suggested to the nuns that they flee. But the nuns decided not to leave the place of their labors and they entrusted themselves to the will of the Lord.

Primus told Lysimachus about the particular beauty of Saint Febronia and advised him to take her for himself. Lysimachus said that he would not seduce a virgin dedicated to God, and he asked Primus to hide the other nuns somewhere so that they would not fall into the hands of Selinus. One of the soldiers overheard the conversation and told Selinus. They led Saint Febronia off to the military commander with her hands bound and a chain around her neck. Selinus urged her to deny Christ, promising her honors, rewards, and marriage with Lysimachus. The holy virgin firmly and fearlessly answered that she had an Immortal Bridegroom, and she would not exchange Him for any mortal man. Selinus subjected her to fierce torture. The saint prayed, "My Savior, do not abandon me in this terrible hour!"

They beat the martyr for a long time, and blood flowed from her wounds. In order to intensify the suffering of Saint Febronia, they tied her to a tree and set a fire under it. The tortures were so inhuman, that the people began to demand an end to the torture,

since there was no confession of guilt by the girl. Selinus continued to mock and jeer at the martyr, but Saint Febronia became silent. Because of weakness she was unable to utter a word. In a rage Selinus gave orders to tear out her tongue, smash her teeth, and finally, to cut off both hands and feet. The people were unable to bear such a horrid spectacle and they left the scene of the torture, cursing Diocletian and his gods.

Among the crowd was the nun Thomais, who afterwards recorded Saint Febronia's martyrdom in detail, and also her student Hieria. She came forth out of the crowd and in the hearing of all reproached Selinus for his boundless cruelty. He gave orders to arrest her, but learning that Hieria was of illustrious standing whom he could not readily subject to torture, he said, "By your speech you have brought on Febronia even greater torment." Finally, they beheaded the holy Martyr Febronia.

Departing the place of execution, Lysimachus wept and withdrew to his quarters. Selinus made ready to eat, but he was not able to take food, and went off to the quiet of his own chambers. Suddenly, he became like one deranged. Looking up to the heavens, he raved and bellowed like a bull, then fell down and struck his head on a marble column and died. When Lysimachus learned of this, he said, "Great is the God of the Christians, Who has avenged Febronia's blood, so unrighteously shed!" He prepared a coffin, placed the martyr's body in it, and took it to the convent.

Abbess Bryaine fell senseless, seeing the mutilated remains of Saint Febronia. Later, she recovered her senses and gave orders to open the convent gates so that all would be able to come and venerate the holy martyr and glorify God Who had given her such endurance in suffering for Christ. Lysimachus and Primus renounced their idol worship and accepted both Baptism and monasticism. Hieria gave her wealth to the convent and petitioned Abbess Bryaine to accept her at the convent in place of Saint Febronia.

Every year, on the day of Saint Febronia's martyrdom, a solemn feast was celebrated at the convent. During the time of the all-night Vigil the nuns always saw Saint Febronia, at her usual place in church. From the relics of Saint Febronia occurred numerous miracles and healings. The Life of Saint Febronia was recorded by the nun Thomais, an eyewitness to her deeds.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 2 – Resurrectional Troparion

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,
You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.
And when from the depths You raised the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

Tone 4 – Patronal Troparion

Today the faithful celebrate the feast with joy,
illuminated 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 4 – Troparion for the Nativity of St John

O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ,
although we cannot praise you worthily,
we honor you in love at your nativity,
for by it you ended your father’s silence and your mother’s barrenness,//
proclaiming to the world the incarnation of the Son of God!

Tone 4 – Troparion for St Febronia

Your lamb Febronia calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice:
“I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You, I endure suffering.
In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You,
and I died so that I might live with You.
Accept me as a pure sacrifice,
for I have offered myself in love.”//
Through her prayers save our souls, since You are merciful!

Tone 2 – Resurrectional Kontakion

Hell became afraid, almighty Savior,
seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation with Adam beheld this and rejoiced with You,//
and the world, my Savior, praises You forever.

Tone 3 – Kontakion for the Nativity of St John

Today the formerly barren woman gives birth to Christ's Forerunner,
who is the fulfillment of every prophecy;
for in the Jordan,
when he laid his hand on the One foretold by the Prophets,//
he was revealed as Prophet, Herald, and Forerunner of God the Word.

Tone 6 – Kontakion for St Febronia

“Most sweet Jesus, my Bridegroom,
it is not hard for me to follow You,” cried Febronia,
“the sweetness of Your love gives wings of hope to my soul,
the beauty of Your mercy has sweetened my heart;
may I drain the cup of sufferings in imitation of You,
so that You may count me worthy to be among the wise virgins:
those who dance with You in Your bridal chamber.”
Therefore, venerable passion-bearer, as we honor the struggles of
your labors, we entreat you://
“Pray that we not find the doors of the bridal chamber locked to us!”

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 2 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 117)

The Lord is my strength and my song / He has become my salvation!

Epistle: Romans 5.1-10

Brethren: Having been justified by faith, we have peace with
God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have
access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope
of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in
tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and
perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not
disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our
hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Gospel: Matthew 6.22-33

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

New. Dep. Anthony Vuckovich
Ev.Mem. Christ Tsvetkoff (’15)
Manuel Dimitrieff (’18)

John Skoluk, Jr. (’48)
Charles Shamkaitis (’49)
Eugenia Kulik (’76)

Health & Salv.	Christine	Tom
Archpr. Peter	Zoey	Diane
Mat. Cynthia	Dominic	Brandi
Archpr. John	Declan	Joyce
Pr. Gregory	Hudson	Galina
Mat. Beverly	Ronald	Thomas
Pr. Patrick	Mary Ann	Diane
Mat. Anne	Dara	Michael
Mat. Catherine	Jaroslava	Linda
Kevin	Andrew	Stephanie
Jon	Andrew	Nathan
Tanya	Vadim	Cindy
Jovan	Hanna	Nathaniel
Rollie	Viktor	Tamara
Nadia	Gerald	Dennis
Joseph	Christine	Maria
Linda	Olga	Elizabeth
Claudia	Janie	Jonah
Carol	Sharon	Jamie
Snezana	Tanya	Kyleigh
Ryan	Renee	Lauren
Nathan	Michael	Kyle
Kara	Chris	Susan
Djuro	Nina	Mark
Paula	Carissa	Christopher
Christopher	Duane	Betty
Karen	Elizabeth	William
Alexandra	Olga	Jack
Jonathan	Klaudia	Grace

*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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to all who helped make the Golf Outing a success. Again, the meal was a huge hit—one of the best yet. Big thanks to Elizabeth Pedersen and all the kitchen helpers. The Golf Outing was able to contribute \$8,000 to the Church's general account.

For Bible Study tomorrow, read Acts 14-17.

On Saturday, July 15, we will hold our **2nd Annual Choir Retreat** from 3pm until Vespers at 6pm, with dinner provided after Vespers. This is a great opportunity for anyone looking to join the choir to get brought up to speed. The choir will work on vocal technique and learn new music for our regular rotation.

Fr Jacob will be on vacation with his family **July 3-12**. For pastoral emergencies, please contact Fr Anthony Saunders (219-221-5695). There will be no Great Vespers on Saturday, July 8. Fr Daniel Doss will serve the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 9.

The Diocese of the Midwest has released its own communications app called **Our Diocese**. It is safe, free of ads or other outside influence, and available at no cost. If you are interested in joining, ask Fr Jacob to send you an invite. More info at our.domoca.org

Mark your calendars:

June 26: Bible Study @ 7pm

June 28: Festal Vespers for the Feast of Sts Peter and Paul @ 6pm

June 29: Feast Day Divine Liturgy at Sts Peter and Paul in Burr Ridge, IL @ 9:30am

July 8: No Great Vespers

July 15: Choir Retreat @ 3pm; dinner after Vespers

July 18: Feast Day Divine Liturgy at St. Elizabeth's in Chesterton @ 9am

July 23: Annual Blessing of Vehicles after Divine Liturgy

July 30: St. Clement Summer Picnic after Divine Liturgy

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$1,951

Glory to God for all things!