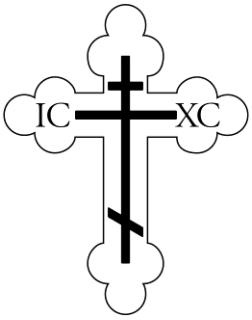
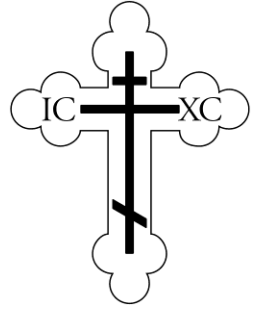


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America



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Merrillville, IN 46410
(219)947-4748
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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.

May 28, 2023

Afterfeast of Ascension

Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior's words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor's sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ. Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely

taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova, who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ's Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In the year 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicaea.

Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies. Also participating in the Council were several great luminaries of the Church: St Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, St Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithos, and others venerated by the Church as holy Fathers.

The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, "God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous."

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. St Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word "consubstantial," (sometimes translated as "of one essence") which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicæan Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ's divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of haughty reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 6 – Resurrectional Troparion

The angelic powers were at Your tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Your grave,
seeking Your most pure body.
You captured hell,
not being tempted by it.
You came to the Virgin granting life.//
O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Tone 4 – Troparion of Ascension

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God,
granting joy to Your Disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.
Through the blessing, they were assured
that You are the Son of God,//
the Redeemer of the world!

Tone 8 – Troparion of the Holy Fathers

You are most glorious, O Christ our God!
You have established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth.
Through them You have guided us to the true Faith.//
O greatly compassionate One, glory to You!

Tone 8 – Kontakion of the Holy Fathers

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established
one Faith for the Church.
Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology,//
It defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

Tone 6 – Kontakion of Ascension

When You had fulfilled the dispensation for our sake,
and united earth to heaven:
You ascended in glory, O Christ our God,
not being parted from those who love You,
but remaining with them and crying://
“I am with you, and there is no one against you!”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 4 – Prokeimenon of the Holy Fathers (Daniel 3)

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers,
and praised and glorified is Your Name forever!

Epistle: Acts 20.16-18, 28-36

At that time, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore, watch and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

Gospel: John 17.1-13

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

New. Dep. Anthony Vuckovich	Anne Springman
Richard Cain	Ev.Mem. John Marcinkowsky ('73)
Joann Barsich	

Health & Salv.	Claudia	Ronald
Archpr. Peter	Carol	Mary Ann
Mat. Cynthia	Snezana	Dara
Archpr. John	Ryan	Jaroslava
Pr. Gregory	Nathan	Andrew
Mat. Beverly	Kara	Andrew
Pr. Patrick	Djuro	Vadim
Mat. Anne	Paula	Hanna
Mat. Catherine	Christopher	Viktor
Kevin	Karen	Gerald
Jon	Alexandra	Christine
Tanya	Jonathan	Olga
Jovan	Christine	Janie
Rollie	Zoey	Sharon
Nadia	Dominic	Tanya
Joseph	Declan	Renee
Linda	Hudson	Michael

Chris	Joyce	Tamara
Nina	Galina	Dennis
Carissa	Thomas	Maria
Duane	Diane	Elizabeth
Elizabeth	Michael	Jonah
Olga	Linda	Susan
Klaudia	Stephanie	Mark
Tom	Nathan	Christopher
Diane	Cindy	Betty
Brandi	Nathaniel	William

*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.

Festal Theotokion (*instead of It is Truly Meet...*)

Magnify, O my soul, Christ the Giver of Life, Who has ascended from earth to heaven!
 We the faithful, with one accord, magnify you, the Mother of God, who, beyond reason and understanding, ineffably gave birth in time to the Timeless One.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today marks the **end of the 2022-2023 Church School Year**. A sincere **thank you** to our teachers and parents.

There is **no Bible Study this week** for the holiday.

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 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. Get it from your phone's app store or create an account at **our.domoca.org**. Then request to join our parish group: Protection of the Virgin Mary Church.

Mark your calendars:

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

June 1: **Faith Enrichment** @ 10am

June 3: **PTVM Golf Outing**
General Panikhida for Memorial Saturday @ 5:30pm

June 5: **Feast Day Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Cathedral @ 9:30a**

June 10-11: **Women's Retreat** at Holy Dormition Monastery

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

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$4,187

On the Ascension of our Lord

A Sermon of St Nikolai Velimirovic

Thus did the One ascend to Heaven Who held heaven within Himself. He who carries hell within himself will end up in hell, but he who bears heaven within his soul will ascend to heaven. And truly, no one can ascend to heaven other than those who have heaven within; and no one can end up in hell besides those who have hell within. The familiar is drawn to what is familiar and unites with the familiar; but it rejects what is not familiar. Matter submits to the spirit to the extent that the human soul is filled with the Divine Spirit; and the laws of nature are obedient to moral laws, which govern the world. Because the Lord Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the perfection of moral law, to Him is subject all matter—the entire physical world, with all the laws of nature.

Any person, as a spirit, can be victorious in his life over a certain law of nature, with the help of another law of nature—that is, he can overcome it with his own spirit. Christ, as the God-Man, could

subject the laws of nature to Himself through the law of the Spirit, which is the supreme law of the created world. However, this concept, just as any other spiritual concept, can be but partially explained by ordinary earthly conceptualizations and reasoning—and that only by examples and comparisons.

Spiritual things only become clear beyond a doubt when the spirit sees them and perceives them. In order to see and feel the manifestations of the spiritual world, long and exhausting spiritual practice is needed, after which, by God's grace, spiritual vision may be opened in a person; this vision allows him to see what seems unbelievable and impossible to ordinary mortals. Nevertheless, a person must first believe those who have seen the unbelievable, and strengthen their faith from day to day, striving to see what is inaccessible to the common gaze.

Not in vain does the Lord say, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" [John 20:29]. The Lord God rejoices in their faith just as a father on earth rejoices that his children believe his every word. All the apostles were present at the Ascension of the Lord, gathered on the hill. This was their last collective meeting. However, this was not the last appearance of Christ. Later He appeared in a vision to the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, and to other apostles, as well as to martyrs, holy hierarchs, and confessors, over the course of the entire history of the Christian Church.

But the day will come—and that day is not far off—when all the righteous men and women who firmly believed in Him throughout their lives will see Him. And around Him in the heaven will gather all those who were baptized on earth in His name—not only with water, but also with the Spirit and Fire. And they will enter into His joy, which the Heavenly Father has prepared for all His chosen, and will inherit a joy that they have never known before. Amen.

Glory to God for all things!