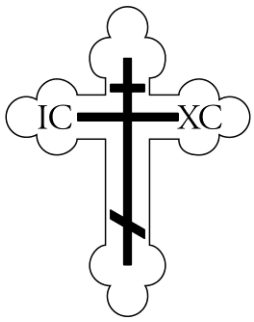
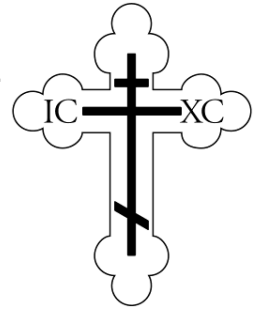


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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.

July 30, 2023

Holy Apostles Silas and Silvanus of the Seventy

The Holy Apostle of the Seventy Silas was a disciple of the Savior. Saint Silas was a respected figure in the original Church at Jerusalem, one of the “chief men among the brethren” (Acts 15:22). The Council of the Apostles was convened at Jerusalem in the year 51 to deal with the question of whether Gentile Christian converts should be required to observe the Mosaic Law. The Apostles sent a message with Paul and Barnabas to the Christians of Antioch, giving the decision of the Council that Christians of Gentile origin did not have to observe the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law. Nonetheless, they were told that they must refrain from partaking of foods offered to idols, from things strangled and from blood, and to refrain from fornication (Acts 15:20-29). Together with Saints Paul and

Barnabas, the Council of the Apostles sent Saints Silas and Jude to explain the message in greater detail, since they both were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Saint Jude was later sent back to Jerusalem, but Saint Silas remained at Antioch and zealously assisted Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, on his missionary journeys preaching the Gospel. They visited Syria, Cilicia, and Macedonia.

In the city of Philippi they were accused of inciting unrest among the people, and for this they were arrested, beaten with rods, and then thrown into prison. At midnight, when the saints were at prayer, suddenly there was a strong earthquake, their chains fell off from them and the doors of the prison opened. The prison guard, supposing that the prisoners had fled, wanted to kill himself, but was stopped by the Apostle Paul. Then, he fell down trembling at the feet of the saints, and with faith accepted their preaching about Christ. He then led them out of the prison and took them to his own home, where he washed their wounds, and was baptized together with all his household.

From Philippi, Saints Paul and Silas proceeded on to the cities of Amphipolis, Apollonia and Thessalonica. In each city they made new converts to Christ and built up the Church. At Corinth the holy Apostle Silas was consecrated as bishop, and worked many miracles and signs, and there he finished his life.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 7 – Resurrectional Troparion

By Your Cross You destroyed death.
To the thief You opened Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.
And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that You are risen,//
granting 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 3 – Troparion for Sts Silas and Silvanus

Holy Apostles Silas and Silvanus,
entreat the merciful God//
to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions!

Tone 7 – Resurrectional Kontakion

The dominion of death
can no longer hold men captive,
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers.
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry:
“The Savior has come to those in faith;//
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

Tone 4 – Kontakion of Sts Silas and Silvanus

You were revealed to be branches of the vine of Christ, O wise ones,
bearing clusters of virtues that pour out on us the wine of salvation.
Receiving it, we are filled with gladness,
and we celebrate your most honored memory, Apostles of the Lord,
Silas and Silvanus.//
Therefore, intercede that great mercy and remission of sins may be
granted 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 7 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 28)

The Lord shall give strength to His people.
The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1.10-18

Brethren: I plead with you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions
among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same
mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me
concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that
there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you

says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Gospel: Matthew 14.14-22

At that time, Jesus went out and saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.”

But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

And they said to Him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.”

He said, “Bring them here to Me.” Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Mat. Delores Donlick
William Harbison Jr.
Jeanne Denesuk
Ev.Mem. Zora Balach ('12)
Salva Bilevich ('13)

Anastasia Lobach ('14)
Nicholas Zhdiniak ('17)
Konstantin Kuchik ('21)
John Olenik ('50)
William Hurey ('86)

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

*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

Today is **Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday**. So, we will take a special collection for the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry.

After venerating the cross, please join us for our **annual Summer Picnic in honor of St. Clement of Ochrid!**

For **Bible Study** Monday, read Acts 24-28.

We received last week a **traditional, handmade coffin in Orthodox style**. Our late brother Tom Mosak ordered it for himself, but unfortunately it was not ready before he passed. Instead of canceling the order, his family decided to give it to the Church. It is now **available to any parishioner** by request, free of charge, for a Church burial.

St Vladimir's Seminary Education Day is being offered for free on Zoom Saturday, August 5, 10am – 4pm. Listen to discussions by Orthodox scholars and ask them your questions on a variety of topics, including Scripture, Church History, current events, and other topics. Details at

https://www.svots.edu/events/Education_Day_Online_2023

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:

July 31: **Bible Study @ 7pm**

Aug 1: Beginning of the **Dormition Fast** (Aug 1-14)

Aug 2: **Canon of Supplication to the Virgin Mary @ 6pm**

Aug 5: **Festal Vespers for the Feast of Transfiguration @ 6pm**

Aug 6: **Divine Liturgy for Transfiguration with blessing of fruit**

Aug 8: **Great Vespers for St. Herman of Alaska @ 6pm**

Aug 9: **Divine Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska @ 10am**

Canon of Supplication to the Virgin Mary @ 6pm

Aug 14: **Vespers with Lamentations for the Theotokos @ 6pm**

Aug 15: **Divine Liturgy for the Dormition of the Theotokos @ 10am**

Aug 16: **Feast Day Divine Liturgy** at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Chicago @ 9:30am

Aug 25-26: **Ladies' Sodality Rummage Sale**

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$6,258

A Reflection on Prison Ministry

The Assembly of Bishops has blessed July 30, 2023 as Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday (PMAS), when hundreds of Orthodox Christian churches of all jurisdictions across the United States will recognize and share about the importance of prison ministry for the life of the Church. To help get us into PMAS spirit, enjoy this beautiful testimony from our friend and former prisoner, Paul, whose life is a real-life example of Christ's Parable of the Prodigal Son. Paul often refers to the ministry of OCPM's Co-Director of Training and Spiritual Care, Fr. Stephen Powley, but his recollections about Fr. Stephen's ministry truly speak to all of us: here is a testament to the power of simply visiting those in prison and choosing to see Christ in them no matter where they are in life.

My story is like many you minister to. I spent four years in a Federal prison in Safford Az. I am 66 now. Before jail I wasted 20 years of my adult life addicted to drugs, alcohol, and worldly things. I was selling drugs to support my bad habits and desires. I was always in and out of trouble and would have probably ended up dead if God had not given me a "wake up call". I hurt a lot of my friends and family who loved me very much and had no real relationship with God.

While in jail I had turned my life over to Jesus, started doing bible studies, and frequenting the chapel. That's where I met Fr. Powley. Such a kind man. Never judging, always happy, always setting a good example, and sharing God's love with all of us. I decided that I was not going to waste the time God had given me to get to know him better without the distractions of the outside world. God had a plan for me to have a more peaceful and happier life.

In prison I watched who I hung out with and minded my own business. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 "Make it your

ambition to lead a quiet life, you should mind your own business and work with your hands so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so you will not be dependent on anybody". These words have changed my life when I can remember to follow them.

Upon my release in 1995 a friend had saved a few boxes of my possessions. My wife was gone, so was my house, car, dogs, everything I thought was important before jail. I decided not to go back to Phoenix but back to Indiana where my parents welcomed me back after 25 years. God had given me a clean slate and a chance for a new start in life. I was committed to not going back to jail or my old lifestyle.

I found a minimum wage job on a construction site sweeping out new homes and cleaning up the messes of others. I was 41 with no skills. A job that would have been beneath me before prison and knowing God.

After a short time, I had moved up to the carpentry crew as a laborer and eventually became a skilled carpenter, married my high school sweetheart, and have a 24-year-old son who is doing so much better than I did in my 20's.

I have had such a blessed, happy, peaceful life over the last 25 years since prison. I have had my ups and downs, but God is faithful and never abandoned me. If God had not given me this time in prison none of this would have been possible.

I recently reconnected with Fr. Powley after over 20 years. What a joy it is to read his devotionals and have a little back and forth with him. I consider him one of the great mentors out there. The Orthodox Prison Ministry is so fortunate to have such an experienced and dedicated man on your team for your mission. It is an honor to know him and love him very much. God truly is great. Thank you and your staff for the work you all do.

To learn more about Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday and for ideas on how to get your parish involved in this national day of awareness, visit theocpm.org/pmas

Glory to God for all things!