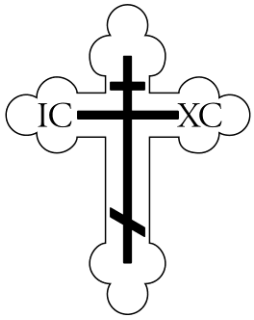


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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.

September 17, 2023

Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross

Holy Martyr Sophia and her daughters Faith, Hope, and Love

The Holy Martyrs Saint Sophia and her daughters Faith, Hope and Love were born in Italy. Their mother was a pious Christian widow who named her daughters for the three Christian virtues. Faith was twelve, Hope was ten, and Love was nine. Saint Sophia raised them in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Sophia and her daughters did not hide their faith in Christ, but openly confessed it before everyone.

An official named Antiochus denounced them to the emperor Hadrian (117-138), who ordered that they be brought to Rome. Realizing that they would be taken before the emperor, the holy virgins prayed fervently to the Lord Jesus Christ, asking that He give them the strength not to fear torture and death. When the holy virgins and their mother came before the emperor, everyone present was amazed at their composure. They looked as though they had been brought to some happy festival, rather than to torture. Summoning each of the sisters in turn, Hadrian urged them to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. The young girls remained unyielding.

Then the emperor ordered them to be tortured. They burned the holy virgins over an iron grating, then threw them into a red-hot oven, and finally into a cauldron with boiling tar, but the Lord preserved them.

The youngest child, Love, was tied to a wheel and they beat her with rods until her body was covered all over with bloody welts. After undergoing unspeakable torments, the holy virgins glorified their Heavenly Bridegroom and remained steadfast in the Faith.

They subjected Saint Sophia to another grievous torture: the mother was forced to watch the suffering of her daughters. She displayed adamant courage and urged her daughters to endure their torments for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. All three maidens were beheaded, and joyfully bent their necks beneath the sword.

In order to intensify Saint Sophia's inner suffering, the emperor permitted her to take the bodies of her daughters. She placed their remains in coffins and loaded them on a wagon. She drove beyond the city limits and reverently buried them on a high hill. Saint Sophia sat there by the graves of her daughters for three days, and finally she gave up her soul to the Lord. Even though she did not suffer for Christ in the flesh, she was not deprived of a martyr's crown. Instead, she suffered in her heart. Believers buried her body there beside her daughters.



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 1 – Troparion of the Cross

O Lord, save Your people,
and bless Your inheritance!
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Your Cross,//
preserve Your habitation!

Tone 5 – Troparion for the Holy Martyrs

You blossomed in the courts of the Lord
as a fruitful olive tree,
O holy martyr Sophia;
in your contest you offered to Christ the sweet fruit of your womb,
your daughters Faith, Hope, and Love.//
Together with them intercede for us all!

Tone 6 – Resurrectional Kontakion

When Christ God the Giver of Life,
raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race.//
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Tone 1 –Kontakion for the Holy Martyrs

The holy branches of noble Sophia,
Faith, Hope, and ^Love,
confounded Greek sophistry through Grace.
They struggled and won the victory//
and have been granted an incorruptible crown by Christ the Master
of all.

Tone 4 – Kontakion of the Cross

As You were voluntarily raised upon the Cross for our sake,
grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God;
make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your power,
granting them victories over their adversaries//
by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Your weapon of peace!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 7 – Prokeimenon for the Cross (Psalm 98)

Extol the Lord our God: / worship at His footstool for He is holy!

Epistle: Galatians 2.16-20 (Sunday before Exaltation)

Brethren: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I, through the law, died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

2 Corinthians 4.6-15 (Sunday)

Brethren: It is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death is working in us, but life in you.

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Gospel: Mark 8.34 – 9.1 (Sunday after Exaltation)

When Jesus had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

Matthew 22.35-46 (Sunday)

At that time, one of them, a lawyer, asked Jesus a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”

They said to Him, “The Son of David.”

He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?”

And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Kimberly Gorseski
Jack Labout
Rachel Boose
Lydia Parkevich
Joseph Spargo
Benjamin Gorseski
Ev.Mem. Gerasim Dukarets ('18)
George Markovich ('30)

Vasili Angeloff ('40)
Serge Chaski ('58)
Theodore Shopoy ('58)
Dimitry Katovich ('60)
Paul Romaniak ('60)
Mary Janos ('76)
Klimo Iliev ('77)
Peter Lengal ('97)

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

*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 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.

O Lord our Savior, bless us, Your entreating people, with an increase in vocations to the priestly order and the monastic life in service of Your holy Church: we pray You, hearken and have mercy.

O Lord, who love mankind, protect and preserve in holiness those who have responded to Your call to service in Your Church and have given themselves to Your Gospel: we pray You, hearken and have mercy.

Instead of “It is Truly Meet”:

Magnify, O my soul, the most precious Cross of the Lord!
You are a mystical Paradise, O Theotokos,
who, though untilled, have brought forth Christ;
through Him the life-bearing wood of the Cross was planted on earth.
Now at its Exaltation,
as we bow in worship before it, we magnify you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **O-Club** will meet today during coffee hour.

For **Bible Study** tomorrow, read Esther Jeremiah 3-8.

The **beautiful new landscaping** which you saw pulling in this morning was donated **in memory of Tom Mosak** by his son Eric.

This Tuesday at 5pm a representative from **Catholic Charities of Gary** will be at our parish **at the invitation of the O-Club** to describe their outreach programs and discuss ways that we might partner in **ministering to the needs of our community**. All are welcome.

September is **Support Our Seminarians Month in the Diocese of the Midwest**. Special petitions have been added to the Augmented Litany. A special collection will also be taken on Sunday, September 24 for the families of our eleven seminarians.

Archbishop Daniel is joining us October 7 & 8 for our 112th anniversary celebration. Vespers will be early at 4pm on Saturday, followed by a reception with bonfire (weather permitting). The anniversary dinner will be after Divine Liturgy on Sunday. Tickets are not required, but a freewill offering will be taken for the meal.

On Saturday, November 4, following an early Great Vespers, our parish will host **Sister Vassa Larin**. Sister Vassa is a Russian Orthodox nun and liturgical scholar who lives and teaches in Vienna. She hosts the online catechetical programs “Coffee with Sister Vassa.” **She will speak to us on the topic of her new book, *Praying in Time: The Hours & Days in Step with Orthodox Christian Tradition*.** Following her talk, there will be a reception. This event is part of the **Journey to the Christian East lecture series** organized by our own Dn. Nicholas Denysenko through his chair at Valparaiso University.

Mark your calendars:

Sept 18: Bible Study @ 7pm

**Sept 19: Presentation by Catholic Charities to O-Club @ 5pm
Parish Council @ 7pm**

Sept 21: Faith Enrichment @ 10am

Sept 22: Women’s Group: Boat ride, cocktails, and apps @ 5:30pm

Sept 23: Fall Clean-Up @ 9am; Lunch provided.

Sept 24: Descent of the Holy Ghost 115th Anniversary

Oct 1: The Protection of the Virgin Mary – our parish feast day!

Oct 6: Divine Liturgy for St. Innocent of Alaska @ 10am

Archbishop Daniel’s Visit

Oct 7: Great Vespers @ 4pm followed by evening reception

Oct 8: PTVM Anniversary Dinner after Divine Liturgy

**Oct 9: Divine Liturgy for St. Tikhon, Enlightener of North America
at St. Elizabeth’s in Chesterton @ 10am**

Nov 4: Sister Vassa Larin @ 5:30p, followed by a reception.

Last week’s gifts to the Lord: \$2,914

Glory to God for all things!