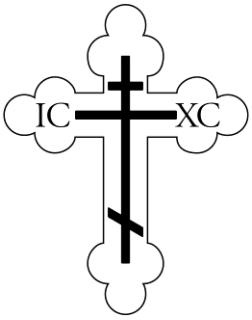


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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.

January 21, 2024

Sanctity of Life Sunday

St Maximus the Confessor

Holy Martyr Neophytus of Nicaea

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 8 – Resurrectional Troparion

You descended from on high, O Merciful One!

You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//

O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, 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 8 – Troparion for St Maximus

O Champion of Orthodoxy, teacher of purity and of true worship,
the enlightener of the universe and the adornment of hierarchs;
all wise Father Maximus, your teachings have gleamed with light
upon all things.//
Intercede before Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 8 – Resurrectional Kontakion

By rising from the tomb You raised the dead and resurrected Adam.
Eve exults in Your Resurrection,
and the world celebrates Your rising from the dead, O greatly
Merciful One!

Tone 4 – Kontakion for St Neophytus

You shined forth from the mount like lightning,
glorifying Christ through your struggles and death as a martyr.//
Therefore, you have received an unfading crown, O Great-martyr
Neophytus.

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 8 – Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 75)

Pray and make your vows before the Lord, our God!

Epistle: Colossians 1.12-18

Brethren: Give thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Gospel: Matthew 22.1-14

Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.’”

“But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore, go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’

“So, those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.

“Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Roger Davidson
Nadia Konowalik
Katherine Harbison
Joseph Bloomfield
Michael Benka

Ev.Mem. Sophia Petroff ('14)
Michael Graban ('20)
Vasily Gemenoff ('45)
Vasily Baran ('53)
Kuzma Kuzmich ('55)

Health & Salv.
Archpr. Peter
Mat. Cynthia
Hierom. John
Pr. Gregory
Mat. Beverly
Pr. Patrick
Mat. Anne
Mat. Catherine
Kevin
Jon
Tanya
Jovan
Rollie
Claudia
Paul
Carol
Snezana
Ryan
Nathan
Kara
Djuro
Paula
Christopher
Karen
Alexandra
Jonathan
Christine
Zoey
Dominic
Declan
Hudson
Ronald

Mary Ann
Dara
Jaroslava
Andrew
Andrew
Vadim
Hanna
Viktor
Gerald
Christine
Olga
Janie
Sharon
Tanya
Renee
Ashton
Michael
Chris
Nina
Carissa
Duane
Elizabeth
Olga
Klaudia
Tom
Diane
Brandi
Joyce
Galina
Thomas
Diane
Stephanie
Cindy

Nathaniel
Tamara
Dennis
Maria
Elizabeth
Jonah
Jamie
Kyleigh
Lauren
Kyle
Mark
Christopher
Betty
William
Grace
Janet
Sarah
Angela
Lauren
Jack
Melissa
Carolynn
Nicholas
Natalie
Lissa
Elizabeth
William
Linda
Margaret
Linda
Jennifer
Diane

To add a name to our parish prayer list, please give it to Fr Jacob

Special Petitions at the Augmented Litany:

Again, we pray that You will grant to the people of this nation the will to do good, to flee from evil, and to practice all righteousness, making us respectful of life and sharers of Your blessings, caring for one another in mercy and truth.

Again, we pray that You will banish all evil from our hearts and wickedness from our laws, enabling us to be servants of Your holy will and performers of Your love.

Again, we pray that You will kindle in our hearts the will to care for the needy, to show kindness to the poor, to aid the homeless and help the helpless.

We pray, O Lord our God, for all those who suffer from acts of war, especially the victims in Ukraine, Israel, and Palestine. 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.

Instead of “*It is Truly Meet...*” we sing this for Theophany:

Magnify, O my soul, the most-pure Virgin Theotokos,
more honorable than the heavenly hosts.

No tongue knows how to praise you worthily, O Theotokos;
even Angels are overcome with awe praising you.

But since you are good, accept our faith;
for you know our love inspired by God.

You are the defender of Christians, and we magnify you.

At “*Blessed be the Name...*”:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, Who are in the bosom of the Father, True God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, Who came into the world to enlighten it: You were pleased to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary for the salvation of our souls by the power of Your All-Holy Spirit. O Master, Who came that we might have life more abundantly, we ask You to enlighten the minds and hearts of those blinded to the truth that life begins at conception and that the unborn in the womb are already adorned

with Your image and likeness; enable us to guard, cherish, and protect the lives of all those who are unable to care for themselves. For You are the Giver of Life, bringing each person from non-being into being, sealing each person with divine and infinite love. Be merciful, O Lord, to those who, through ignorance or willfulness, affront Your divine goodness and providence through the evil act of abortion. May they, and all of us, come to the light of Your Truth and glorify You, the Giver of Life, together with Your Father, and Your All-Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The O-Club will meet today during coffee hour.

The 2024 annual meeting will be held Sunday, February 11. The agenda and all reports received so far are available on the parish website at www.ptvm.com/annual-reports. Printed report packets will be ready next Sunday, after all reports have been received.

For Bible Study tomorrow, read Nehemiah 10-13.

Every year, Orthodox Christian **homes are blessed with the new holy water of Theophany.** Make an appointment with Fr Jacob to have your home blessed. Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex. The Church teaches us to sanctify everything: dwellings, places of work, all our pursuits, and the fruits of our labor. The home blessing at Theophany represents a renewal of our lives in Christ.

Here is how to prepare for your house blessing: All who reside in the household should make every effort to be present for the blessing. We gather in the dining room or home altar. On your dining room table or family icon corner, set 1) A lit candle, 2) An icon of Christ, and 3) A small bowl. You may also prepare a list of the names of family members living and departed you wish to pray for. Also please remember to turn off any televisions or other noisy electronics. When the priest arrives everyone in the house should gather around the table/family altar and join in prayer and singing. If there are children, they usually carry the icon and a candle to lead the priest from room to room. If not, any member of the household will lead the priest. After the blessing, we all gather back around the icon for the dismissal.

The **Women's Book Group** will meet on January 25 @ 6pm to discuss the book *On Living Simply: The Golden Voice of St. John Chrysostom*.

The **Men's Reading Group** will meet on **Thursday, Feb 1 at 7pm** to discuss *On the Incarnation* by St. Athanasius of Alexandria.

Mark your calendars:

Jan 22: **Bible Study @ 7pm**

Jan 23: **Guys' Night Out at Maxim's Lounge @ 6pm**

Jan 25: **Women's Book Group @ 6pm**

Jan 29: **Great Vespers for the feast of Three Hierarchs @ 6pm**

Jan 30: **Divine Liturgy for the feast of Three Hierarchs @ 10am**

Feb 1: **Great Vespers for the Meeting of the Lord @ 6pm**
Men's Reading Group @ 7pm

Feb 2: **Divine Liturgy for the Meeting of the Lord @ 10am**

Feb 11: **Annual Parish Meeting after Divine Liturgy**

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$1,425

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon

Sunday, January 21, 2024

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

As we mark Sanctity of Life Sunday this year, there will be much discussion of the "right to life." Of course, we Orthodox Christians believe that certain rights, the right to life among them, should be respected, enshrined in law, and protected by civil authority. But human life is something even more precious than a mere right: it is a divine gift.

"Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward," as the Psalmist says (Ps. 126:3). We are called to recognize every human life, from conception to natural death, as a

gift of the Lord. This means protecting the unborn, but in a broader sense this means helping our broken society and broken world to view our fellow human beings not as mere mouths to feed or potential threats or problems to be solved or subjects to be controlled, but as blessings from above. The unborn are a blessing; children are a blessing; the elderly are a blessing; the difficult people in our lives are a blessing; even our enemies—perhaps especially our enemies—are a blessing.

Moreover, we speak of the sanctity of life for two reasons: because life comes from the Lord, and because it should be offered back to the Lord through service to him and to others, resulting in sanctity. If we understand that we are merely servants, doing as we have been bidden (Lk. 17:10), and if we recognize that the greatest and holiest is the one who became a servant of all through his Incarnation, his ministry, and his Passion and Rising (Mt. 23:11), then we are in the best position of all to treat each human being as a blessing, not in an abstract sense, but in the sense of someone whom we are privileged to serve.

Living in this way, we also better understand our own life as a blessing, a blessing because it is an opportunity to attain to holiness. If we truly live according to our belief in the profound sanctity of life, then we will naturally “commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God,” sending up thanksgiving and blessing his holy Name on account of the incalculably precious gift of human life and for every man who comes into the world (Jn. 1:9).

On this Sanctity of Life Sunday, we pray that all people of North America and throughout the world would come to recognize the good and perfect gift (Jam. 1:17) that is human life and learn to cherish that gift and render glory unto the Giver, the benevolent Creator of all things, one God in Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, unto the never-ending ages.

Yours in Christ,

+Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Glory to God for all things!