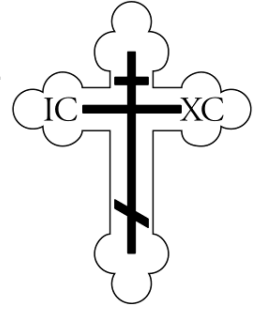
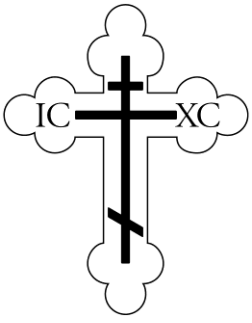


Protection of the Virgin Mary

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.

April 14, 2024

4th Sunday of Great Lent: St. John of the Ladder

*On the Sundays of Great Lent, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy
of St. Basil the Great*

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John Klimakos, the author of The Ladder of Divine Ascent. In this book the Igoumen of Saint Katherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai bears witness to the great effort which is required for entry into God's Kingdom (Matthew 10:12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is difficult since it is "not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (Ephesians 6:12). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, as the Lord has said, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

Saint John was born around the year 525, the son of devout and wealthy parents. He received a very good education, but at the age of sixteen, he forsook the world and went to Mount Sinai, subjecting himself to the spiritual guidance of Elder Martyrios. When he was nineteen years of age, his Elder reposed. Then Saint John entered the arena of hesychasm, visiting the monastic communities of Skete and Tabennise in Egypt. For another forty years, he lived in a cell at Thora in the Sinai Desert, which was a 5 mile walk from the Monastery of Saint Katherine.

Aflame with indescribable longing for God, he ate everything that was permitted by the monastic Rule, but only in very small quantities, and not unto satiety. By so doing, he overcame the vice of pride; and by eating just a little food, he humbled the stomach, which always wants more. He raised his body from death and paralysis by the remembrance of death, and he overcame the tyranny of anger with the sword of obedience.

Who can describe the fountain of his tears, which is now to be seen in very few individuals? He slept only as much as was necessary to prevent his mind from being distracted. Before going to sleep he prayed a great deal, and he also wrote books. This was how he subdued despondency. His entire life was spent in unceasing prayer, and incomparable love for God.

After writing The Ladder at the request of Igoumen John of Raithu Monastery, and leading a God-pleasing life, Saint John fell asleep in the Lord when he was about seventy-five years old (ca. 603). He is also commemorated on March 30.

The inscription on his icon is from Step 7:2. It reads: "Compunction is a perennial trial of the conscience, which brings about the cooling of the fire of the heart through mental confession. And confession is a forgetfulness of nature, since someone because of this forgot to eat his bread."

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 4 – Resurrectional Troparion

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

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 1 – Troparion for St John

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,
you were a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father John.
You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil and prayer,
healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to you by faith.
Glory to Him Who gave you strength!
Glory to Him Who granted you a ^crown!//
Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

Tone 4 – Resurrectional Kontakion

My Savior and Redeemer
as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their
chains.
He has shattered the gates of hell,
and as Master,//
He has risen on the third day!

Tone 4 – Kontakion for St John

The Lord truly set you on the heights of abstinence,
to be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe,//
O our father and teacher John.

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 4 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 103)

O Lord, how manifold are Your works;
in wisdom have You made them all!

Tone 7 – Prokeimenon for St. John (Psalm 149)

Let the saints exult in glory; / let them sing for joy on their couches!

Epistle: Hebrews 6.13-20 (Sunday)

Brethren: When God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Ephesians 5.9-19 (St John)

Brethren: The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore, He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Gospel: Mark 9.17-31 (Sunday)

At that time: One of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So, I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”

He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.” Then they brought him to Him.

And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So, He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!”

Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”

So, He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

Matthew 4.25 – 5.12 (St John)

At that time: Great multitudes followed Jesus – from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Sequoia Bible	Dimitri Nandov ('19)
James Ronald Hughes	Simeon Chipko ('56)
Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria	Helen Szymanski ('56)
Lissa Yogan	Wilma Mosak ('81)
Ev.Mem. Naum Christoff ('17)	Michael Grisak ('94)

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

Tom	Christopher	Chris
Diane	Betty	Erin
Brandi	William	Jude
Joyce	Grace	Miriam
Galina	Janet	Ephraim
Thomas	Sarah	Irina
Diane	Angela	Cyan
Stephanie	Lauren	Alla
Cindy	Jack	Gregory
Nathaniel	Melissa	Joseph
Tamara	Carolynn	Michael
Dennis	Nicholas	George
Maria	Natalie	Ivanka
Elizabeth	Elizabeth	Simeon
Jonah	William	Lupka
Jamie	Linda	Vangel
Kyleigh	Margaret	Jovan
Lauren	Linda	Cveta
Kyle	Jennifer	Terry
Mark	Diane	

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

During Great Lent, Orthodox Christians **make more time for prayer**, **deny themselves rich and satisfying foods** (meat, dairy, fish), and find opportunities to **help those in need** (almsgiving). They also examine their consciences and repent of their sins before the Lord in the **Sacrament of Confession**. Confession is always available after evening services. You can also make an appointment with Fr Jacob, including before Sunday Liturgy if necessary.

Next Sunday will be the last opportunity to bring in **diapers for the Women's Care Center** in Hammond. We will also have a visitor next week from **Habitat for Humanity**, who will share with us during coffee hour what work they are currently doing in Northwest Indiana.

On Thursday April 25, beginning promptly at 5pm, the **Women's group will enjoy a tour of the Carmelite Shrine** in Munster, then meet for **dinner at Aladdin Pita** in Merrillville.

The **Chicago Deanery Lenten Vespers** return at 6pm on Sundays:

Tonight at St. Joseph in Wheaton, IL

April 21 at Sts Cyril and Methodius in Milwaukee, IL

April 28 at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago, IL

This summer (June 21-28) the Diocese of the Midwest is hosting **Chicago 2024: an international Orthodox young adult gathering** organized by Suprasl World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth. Spots are still available. Applications are due by the end of this month.

www.suprasl.org/chicago2024.

Mark your calendars:

Apr 16: Parish Council meeting @ 7pm

Apr 17: Presanctified Liturgy and Lenten potluck @ 6pm

Apr 18: Great Canon and Life of St Mary of Egypt @ 10am

Apr 19: Presanctified Liturgy and Lenten potluck @ 10am

Apr 20: Catechism @ 4:30pm

Apr 25: Women's Group tours Carmelite Shrine in Munster @ 5pm

Apr 27: Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy @ 10am, followed by pancake breakfast and preparing palms and pussywillows

May 10: O-Club Trivia Night for Lowell Women's Shelter @ 6pm

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$11,770

Glory to God for all things!