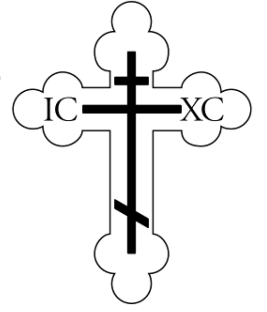
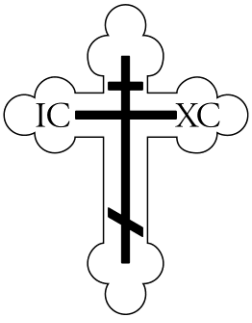


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America

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Merrillville, IN
(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
hall after Divine
Liturgy for coffee hour.

March 16, 2025

2nd Sunday of Great Lent

St. Gregory Palamas

During Great Lent, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great (on page 101 of the black Liturgy books)

Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, was born in 1296 in Constantinople. St Gregory's father became a prominent dignitary at the court of Andronicus II Paleologos, but he soon died, and Andronicus himself took part in the raising and education of the fatherless boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, barely

twenty years old, withdrew to Mount Athos in the year 1316 and became a novice in the Vatopedi monastery under the guidance of St Nikodemos. There he was tonsured and began on the path of asceticism. After the demise of St Nikodemos, Gregory spent eight years of spiritual struggle under the guidance of the Elder Nikephoros, and at the latter's death, Gregory transferred to the Lavra of St Athanasius. Here he served in the trapeza and became a church singer. After three years, he resettled in the small skete of Glossia, striving for a greater degree of spiritual perfection.

The head of this monastery began to teach the young man the method of unceasing prayer and mental activity, which had been cultivated by monastics beginning with the great desert ascetics of the fourth century. Later, in the eleventh century, St Simeon the New Theologian provided detailed instruction in mental activity for those praying in an outward manner, and the ascetics of Athos put it into practice. The experienced use of mental prayer (or prayer of the heart), requiring solitude and quiet, is called "Hesychasm" (from the Greek "hesychia" meaning calm, silence), and those practicing it were called "hesychasts."

Gregory became fully imbued with the spirit of hesychasm and adopted it as an essential part of his life. In the year 1326, because of the threat of Turkish invasions, he and the brethren retreated to Thessalonica, where he was then ordained to the holy priesthood. St Gregory combined his priestly duties with the life of a hermit. Five days of the week he spent in silence and prayer, and only on Saturday and Sunday did he come out to his people. He celebrated divine services and preached sermons. For those present in church, his teaching often evoked both tenderness and tears. Sometimes he visited theological gatherings of the city's educated youth, headed by the future patriarch, Isidore. He found a place suitable for solitary life near Thessalonica in Bereia. Soon he gathered a small community of monks and guided it for five years. In 1331 the saint withdrew to Mt. Athos and lived in various monasteries, devoting himself to theological works until the end of his life.

In the 1330s events took place in the life of the Eastern Church which brought St Gregory great renown as a teacher of hesychasm. About the year 1330, the learned monk Barlaam arrived in Constantinople from Calabria, Italy. He was the author of treatises on logic and astronomy, a skilled and sharp-witted orator, and he received a university chair in the capital city. He began to expound on the works of St Dionysius the Areopagite, whose apophatic ("negative")

theology was acclaimed in both the Eastern and Western Churches. Soon Barlaam journeyed to Mt. Athos, where he became acquainted with the spiritual life of the hesychasts. He ridiculed the teachings of the monks about their methods of prayer and about the uncreated light seen by the hesychasts. Saying that it was impossible to experience the essence of God, he attempted to demonstrate the created, material nature of the light of Tabor (at the Transfiguration).

St Gregory, at the request of the Athonite monks, replied with verbal admonitions at first. But eventually he put his theological arguments in writing. Thus appeared the "Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts" (1338). Towards the year 1340 the Athonites with the assistance of the saint compiled a general response to Barlaam, the so-called "Hagiorite Tome." At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Hagia Sophia, St Gregory Palamas debated with Barlaam. On May 27, 1341 the Council accepted the position of St Gregory that God, unapproachable in His essence, reveals Himself through His energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the light of Tabor, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Barlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself was anathemized and fled to Calabria.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Barlaamites was far from over. Passions grew to such a state that in 1344 the patriarch called St Gregory the cause of all disorders in the Church and had him locked in prison. In 1347, when John XIV was replaced on the patriarchal throne by Isidore, St Gregory was set free and made Archbishop of Thessalonica. In 1351 the Council of Blachernae solemnly upheld the Orthodoxy of his teachings.

On one of his travels to Constantinople his ship fell into the hands of the Turks. Even in captivity, St Gregory preached to Christian prisoners and his Muslim captors. Some of the Muslims were unable to endure this, so they beat him and would have killed him if they had not expected to obtain a large ransom for him. A year later, St Gregory was ransomed and returned to Thessalonica. St Gregory performed many miracles in the three years before his death, healing those afflicted with illness. On the eve of his repose, Saint John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words "To the heights! To the heights!" Saint Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord on November 14, 1359. In 1368 he was canonized at a Constantinople Council under Patriarch Philotheus (1354-1355, 1364-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 5 – Resurrectional Troparion

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 8 – Troparion to St. Gregory Palamas

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation,
O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians,
O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of
grace,//
always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

Tone 8 – Kontakion to St. Gregory Palamas

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom,
joyful trumpet of theology,
together we sing your praises, O God-inspired Gregory.
Since you now stand before the Original Mind, guide our minds to
Him, O Father,//
so that we may sing to you: “Rejoice, preacher of grace!”

Tone 4 – Lenten Kontakion

Now is the time for action!
Judgment is at the doors!
So let us rise and fast,
offering alms with tears of compunction and crying:
“Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea;
but forgive us, O Master of all,//
so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns!”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 5 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 11)

You, O Lord, shall protect us
and preserve us from this generation forever!

Tone 1 – Prokeimenon for St. Gregory Palamas (Psalm 48)

My mouth shall speak wisdom;
the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

Epistle: Hebrews 1.10-2.3 (Sunday)

Brethren: God says to His Son, “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.”

But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

Hebrews 7.26-8.2 (St. Gregory Palamas)

Brethren: Such a high Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Gospel: Mark 2.1-12 (2nd Sunday of Lent)

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So, when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

John 10.9-16 (St. Gregory Palamas)

The Lord said to his disciples: “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Joyce Krochta	Michael Spevak ('63)
Tiana West	Theodore Guba ('74)
Valentina Metulynsky	Olga Pavlov ('82)
Ev.Mem. Gregory Borisenko ('27)	Vasil Bliznakoff ('99)
Vasily Shokaroff ('27)	James Ronald Hughes (2024)
John Shostak ('35)	

Health & Salv.	Pr. Gregory	Mary Ann	Maja
Archpr. Peter	Mat. Beverly	Raymond	Raymond
Mat. Cynthia	Mat. Anne	Edward	Anne
Hierom. John	Nun Theodora	Charlotte	Desiree
Archpr. Jonathan	Brendan	Joseph	Robb
Mat. Vera	Rollie	Janice	Gerald
Pr. Patrick	Claudia	Klaudia	Janet

Gerald	Moses	Marcietta	Mazzy
Rebecca	Helena	Maria	John
Christopher	James	Alla	Terry
Brianna	Elijah	Elizabeth	Angie
Logan	Lydia	Samuel	Irina
Olga	Nina	Joseph	Elizabeth
Janie	George	Dwight	Vitaliy
Sharon	Linda	Renee	Maria
Tanya	Kimberly	Dominik	Viktoria
Renee	Steven	Monica	Rebecca
Ashton	Jamie	Charles	Pauline
Michael	Kyleigh	Kimberly	Meagan
Chris	Lauren	Abigail	Minnie
Nina	Kyle	Charles	Richard
Carissa	Linda	Rosemary	Rosie
Carol	Denise	Nicholas	Sarah
Snezana	John	Natalie	Milton
Ryan	Cindy	Jovan	Andrew
Nathan	Ron	Michael	Carol
Kara	Matthew	Abram	Lidia
Karen	John	Zoë	Daisy
Alisa	Erin	Brenda	Julie
Michael	Aaron	Lisa	

To add the name of a loved one recently departed or on the anniversary of their repose, or someone living and in particular need of prayer, please speak 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, Russia, 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, hearken and have mercy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After venerating the cross, we will serve the **40-day memorial for Tiana West** and the **1-year memorial for Ron Hughes**.

During Great Lent, Orthodox Christians **make more time for prayer, fast from 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 available before or after evening services. You can also make an appointment with Fr Jacob, including before Sunday Liturgy or after coffee hour, if necessary.

Following Vespers on Saturday, March 29, Fr Nicholas will offer a Lenten talk entitled **“Lament and Joy: Orthodox Lenten Liturgy.”**

The **church school** is organizing a viewing of the movie **“The King of Kings”** at Emagine Theaters in Portage on April 11 at 4:15pm. Please let Elizabeth Wysocki know if you would like to come.

The **Chicago Deanery Lenten Vespers** return at 6pm on Sundays:
March 16 at Christ the Savior in Chicago, IL
March 23 at PTVM... that's us!
March 30 at St Makarios in Hyde Park, IL
April 6 at Holy Theophany in Lake Geneva, WI

Mark your calendars:

Mar 18: **Parish Council** meeting @ 7pm

Mar 19: **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts @ 6pm** (& potluck dinner)

Mar 21: **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts @ 10am**

Mar 23: **PTVM hosts the Chicago Deanery Lenten Vespers @ 6pm** followed by a meal.

Mar 25: **Vesperal Liturgy for the Annunciation of our Lord @ 10am**
Guys' Night Out at Maxim's in Merrillville @ 6pm

Mar 28: **Blood Drive 12 – 6pm**

Mar 29: **Memorial Saturday: Panikhida at PTVM cemetery @ 10am**
Talk on “Lenten Liturgy” by Fr Nicholas after Vespers (7p)

Apr 3: **Men's Reading Group @ 6:45pm**

Apr 5: **Church Spring Cleaning @ 9am**

Apr 11: **Church School outing to see the “The King of Kings” @ 4pm**

Apr 12: **Lazarus Saturday Liturgy, pancakes, and palms @ 10am**

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$1,786

Glory to God for all things!