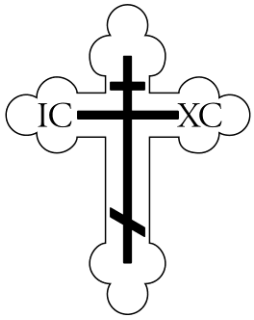


# Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago  
and the Midwest  
Orthodox Church  
in America



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Merrillville, IN  
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Rev. Dr. Jacob Van Sickle  
(219)384-6826 • [frjacobvansickle@gmail.com](mailto: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.

## July 6, 2025 Saint Sisoës the Great

Saint Sisoës the Great (+ 429) was a solitary monk, pursuing asceticism in the Egyptian desert in a cave sanctified by the prayerful labors of his predecessor, St Anthony the Great. For his sixty years of labor in the desert, St Sisoës attained to sublime spiritual purity and he was granted the gift of wonderworking, so that by his prayers he once restored a dead child back to life.

Extremely strict with himself, Abba Sisoës was very merciful and compassionate to others, and he received everyone with love. When one of the monks asked how he might attain to a constant remembrance of God, St Sisoës remarked, "That is no great thing, my son, but it is a great thing to regard yourself as inferior to everyone else. This leads to the acquisition of humility." Asked by the

monks whether one year is sufficient for repentance if a brother sins, Abba Sisoës said, “I trust in the mercy of God that if such a man repents with all his heart, then God will accept his repentance in three days.”

When St Sisoës lay upon his deathbed, the disciples surrounding the Elder saw that his face shone like the sun, and he spoke with someone. The monks asked, “With whom are you speaking, Father?” He said that angels had come for his soul, and he was entreating them to give him a little more time for repentance. The monks said, “You have no need for repentance, Father.” St Sisoës said with great humility, “I do not think that I have even begun to repent.”

## HYMNS OF THE DAY

### Tone 3 – 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 of St. Sisoës

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,

you were a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father Sisoës.

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 3 – Resurrectional Kontakion**

On this day You rose from the tomb, O Merciful One,  
leading us from the gates of death.

On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;  
with the Prophets and Patriarchs//  
they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power.

### **Tone 4 – Kontakion of St. Sisoës**

In asceticism you were revealed to be an earthly Angel,  
continually enlightening the thoughts of the faithful with divine signs.  
Therefore, we honor you with faith, venerable Sisoës.

### **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 3 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 46)**

Sing praises to our God, sing praises!  
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

### **Epistle: Romans 6.18-23 (Sunday)**

Brethren: Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Gospel: Matthew 8.5-13 (Sunday)**

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”

And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.”

The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>N.Dep.</b> Vernon Cayten            | Helen Zhichich (1916)      |
| John Dorrall                           | Alexander Tatarchuk (1931) |
| Stephen Mitrovich                      | Matrona Prokopovick (1954) |
| Sharon Barcinski                       | Naum Svetanoff (1958)      |
| <b>Ev. Mem.</b> Bogdan Potrebich ('14) | Michael Dimitry (1966)     |
| Paraskeva Balnyaka (1915)              | Agnes Kudubec (1992)       |

|                           |             |         |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|
| <b>Health &amp; Salv.</b> | Maja        | Snezana |
| Archpr. Peter             | Gerald      | Ryan    |
| Mat. Cynthia              | Janet       | Nathan  |
| Hierom. John              | Gerald      | Kara    |
| Archpr. Jonathan          | Rebecca     | Moses   |
| Mat. Vera                 | Christopher | Helena  |
| Mat. Anne                 | Brianna     | James   |
| Valer                     | Logan       | Elijah  |
| Nun Theodora              | Olga        | Lydia   |
| Rollie                    | Janie       | Nina    |
| Claudia                   | Sharon      | Jamie   |
| Mary Ann                  | Tanya       | Kyleigh |
| Raymond                   | Renee       | Lauren  |
| Edward                    | Ashton      | Kyle    |
| Charlotte                 | Michael     | Matthew |
| Klaudia                   | Carol       | John    |

|           |          |          |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| Erin      | Sarah    | Ethan    |
| Aaron     | Milton   | Rita     |
| Marcietta | Andrew   | Carrie   |
| Charles   | Carol    | Cecilia  |
| Rosemary  | Lidia    | Shaun    |
| Nicholas  | Julie    | Ryan     |
| Natalie   | Dorothy  | Morgan   |
| Jovan     | Ann      | James    |
| Joseph    | Michael  | Michael  |
| Thomas    | Betty    | Mary     |
| Christine | James    | Kimberly |
| Meagan    | Jacob    | Marley   |
| Minnie    | Robert   | Miette   |
| Richard   | Courtney | Jennifer |
| Rosie     | Sarah    | Hunter   |

*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 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, Russia, Israel, Palestine, and Iran. 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

**Our parking lot is scheduled for repaving** the week of July 14-18 (Monday through Friday), while our clergy and delegates attend the **All-American Council**.

**July 20 will be the blessing of vehicles after Liturgy.** Children are encouraged to bring their favorite mode of transportation to be blessed and enjoy riding on our new parking lot.

**July 27 will be our annual summer picnic in honor of St Clement of Ochrid.** If anyone would like to help set up games or activities, please speak with Fr Jacob.

### Mark your calendars:

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

**July 8: Church School trip to Six Flags Great America**

**July 12: Feast Day Liturgy at Sts Peter and Paul Macedonian Church  
in Crown Point @ 10am**

**July 14-18: All-American Council in Phoenix; church parking lot  
repaved**

**July 19: Catechism @ 4:30pm**

**July 20: Blessing of Cars and bikes etc. after Liturgy.**

**July 25: Red Cross Blood Drive 12-6pm**

**July 27: St Clement Summer Picnic after Divine Liturgy**

**Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$3,150**

# **Homily at the Glorification of St Olga of Alaska**

**from His Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon**

In today's Gospel, we heard how the Lord called four of the greatest apostles, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, four simple men from the land of Galilee, four fishermen who were dutifully fulfilling their work, casting their nets and mending their nets, who nevertheless, at the word of the Lord, left their boats and their nets, and followed him who said that he would make them fishers of men. And we heard how, afterward, the Lord "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people."

The connection between the call of the apostles and the activity of teaching, preaching, and healing is not incidental. In this season after Pentecost, as we reflect on the life and ministry of Our Lord, we are not reflecting merely on an event that took place in the distant past. After our Lord's bodily Ascension into heaven, he sent down the Holy Spirit to dwell in his disciples and apostles, and the presence of the Holy Spirit made him present in them, too. Before his Ascension, the Lord said to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." This assurance was fulfilled not despite, but because of, his Ascension and the descent of the Spirit.

According to the economy the Lord established for our salvation, when he ascended in his body, he also descended to dwell, through the Spirit, in every believer.

In this way, the Lord's ministry continued in the apostles: even after he had apparently left this earth, he remained in them, and in them he continued to preach and teach and heal all kinds of sickness and disease. This is what we read in the Book of Acts throughout the Paschal season: the Lord was still at work in his apostles and disciples.

However, the Lord tells us that he is with us, not just to the end of the apostolic era, but to the end of the age, to the end of this world. He is continuously present with his faithful people in and through his saints. Just as he taught and healed through the disciples and apostles in the first century, so he continues to teach and heal through holy people throughout the ages, down to the present day.

Let us further consider the Gospel we heard today, the Gospel appointed to be read for the newly-glorified saint, the holy and righteous Olga of Kwethluk. In that Gospel reading, we heard of a woman with a flow of blood, who was healed by touching Christ's garment. What is Christ's garment? Certainly, it is a chiton, or robe, or some piece of clothing that he was wearing two thousand years ago.

But St. Simeon Metaphrastes, in the third prayer before communion, describes Christ's Flesh as a garment, and Christ's Flesh is none other than his Body. And, according to St. Paul, all believers are called to be members of that Body. Hence, the garment that this woman touches can be interpreted as the Body of the elect, the saints. By encountering sanctity, we encounter Christ, and therefore we encounter the possibility of healing, both bodily and spiritual.

The Gospel we read for St. Olga helps us understand the significance of her life. The Incarnation, as St. Maximus the Confessor teaches, did not end with our Lord's Nativity in the flesh: this was only the beginning of Our Lord's becoming man. At the moment of his Mother's "Let it be," the Lord definitively took on human nature, uniting it to his divine person, such that we confess him in two natures as fully God and fully man. But he continues to become incarnate, throughout time and space, in the lives and actions and hearts of his saints.

Thus, every true saint is the presence of Christ on earth. Each saint's life is a continuation of his ministry. In the saints, he is truly with us to the end of the age. Christ, in the language of St. Nikolai of

Zhicha and St. Justin of Cheliye, is the “Universal Man.” The Universal Man, through the saints, is present in particular times and places.

Likewise, through their participation in the divine life, through their practice of God-like love, the saints transcend the particulars of time and space and become universal. As St. Justin says, insofar as their lives and works are centered on the God-man Jesus Christ, they too, become universal men. They are available to all, equally, without stint, without measure. As St. Gregory Palamas teaches, the saints become eternal. To put it another way, the saints become real persons.

St. Olga, the holy matushka of Kwethluk, the holy daughter of the Orthodox Christian Yup’ik people, the holy shoot of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, shines forth with the love of God for all the world. For sixty-two years, she made Christ present to the Yup’ik faithful and the faithful throughout Alaska. Now, she has gone to dwell with him who dwells beyond the stars. Now, she has gone to dwell with him who dwells with his faithful people until the end of the age.

Now, in him, St. Olga is present and active throughout the world, working wonders and performing healings for the faithful throughout time and space. As we read in her service last night, she is a wonderworker “through whom Christ grants us swift cures, saving reproofs, and a mighty ally in spiritual battle.”

As St. Paul instructs us in his first epistle to the Corinthians: “let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”

St. Olga, whose love and compassion knew no bounds during this present life, now boundlessly shares her love, animated by the love of God, with people throughout the world. She, who made the Infinite One concretely present in Kwethluk during her earthly ministry as a midwife and matushka, now continues to share his compassion, his healing, his mercy, and his joy with faithful people throughout the world.

May our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, who is truly present with us in the persons of his saints, continue to grant us great mercy through their prayers, both in this present life and in the life to come. May he, through the wonders and intercessions and example of St. Olga and all the saints, lead us to himself, for he is the only source of everlasting life, true healing, and salvation from our sins.

To him, together with his Father who is from everlasting and his all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, be all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.