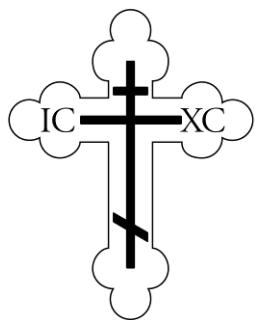
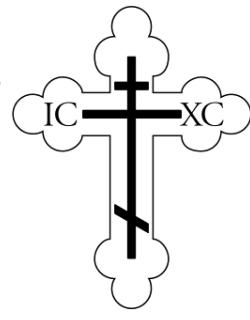


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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
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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.

January 18, 2026

Sts. Athanasius the Great and Cyril of Alexandria

Saint Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria, was a great Father of the Church and a pillar of Orthodoxy. He was born around the year 297 in the city of Alexandria into a family of pious Christians. He received a fine secular education, but he acquired more knowledge by diligent study of the Holy Scripture. In his childhood, the future hierarch Athanasius became known to Saint Alexander the Patriarch of Alexandria (May 29). A group of children, which included Athanasius, were playing at the seashore. The Christian children decided to baptize their pagan playmates.

The young Athanasius, whom the children designated as "bishop", performed the Baptism, precisely repeating the words he heard in church during this sacrament. Patriarch Alexander observed all this from a window. He then commanded that the children and their parents be brought to him. He conversed with them for a long while, and determined that the Baptism performed by the children was done according to the Church order. He acknowledged the Baptism as real and sealed it with the sacrament of Chrismation. From this moment, the Patriarch looked after the spiritual upbringing of Athanasius and in time brought him into the clergy, at first as a reader, and then he ordained him as a deacon.

It was as a deacon that Saint Athanasius accompanied Patriarch Alexander to the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in the year 325. At the Council, Saint Athanasius refuted of the heresy of Arius. His speech met with the approval of the Orthodox Fathers of the Council, but the Arians, those openly and those secretly so, came to hate Athanasius and persecuted him for the rest of his life.

After the death of holy Patriarch Alexander, Saint Athanasius was unanimously chosen as his successor in the See of Alexandria. He refused, accounting himself unworthy, but at the insistence of all the Orthodox populace that it was in agreement, he was consecrated bishop when he was twenty-eight, and installed as the archpastor of the Alexandrian Church. St Athanasius guided the Church for forty-seven years, and during this time he endured persecution and grief from his antagonists. Several times he was expelled from Alexandria and hid himself from the Arians in desolate places, since they repeatedly tried to kill him. St Athanasius spent more than twenty years in exile, returned to his flock, and then was banished again.

There was a time when he remained as the only Orthodox bishop in the area, a moment when all the other bishops had fallen into heresy. At the false councils of Arian bishops he was deposed as bishop. Despite being persecuted for many years, the saint continued to defend the purity of the Orthodox Faith, and he wrote countless letters and tracts against the Arian heresy.

When Julian the Apostate (361-363) began a persecution against Christians, his wrath first fell upon Saint Athanasius, whom he considered a great pillar of Orthodoxy. Julian intended to kill the saint in order to strike Christianity a grievous blow, but he soon perished himself. Mortally wounded by an arrow during a battle, he cried out with despair: "You have conquered, O Galilean." After Julian's death, Saint Athanasius guided the Alexandrian Church for seven years and died in 373, at the age of seventy-six.

Numerous works of Saint Athanasius have been preserved; four Orations against the Arian heresy; also an Epistle to Epictetus, bishop of the Church of Corinth, on the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ; four Epistles to Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, about the Holy Spirit and His equality with the Father and the Son, directed against the heresy of Macedonius.

Other apologetic works of the Saint in defense of Orthodoxy have been preserved, among which is the Letter to the Emperor Constantius. Saint Athanasius wrote commentaries on Holy Scripture, and books of a moral and didactic character, as well as a biography of Saint Anthony the Great (January 17), with whom Saint Athanasius was very close. Saint John Chrysostom advised every Orthodox Christian to read this Life.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 7 – Resurrectional Troparion

By Your Cross You destroyed death.
To the thief You opened Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.
And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that You are risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

Tone 4 – Patronal Troparion

Today the faithful celebrate the feast with joy,
illumined 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 3 – Sts. Athanasius and Cyril

You shone forth with works of Orthodoxy and quenched all heresy,
and became victorious trophy-bearers, hierarchs Athanasius and Cyril.
You enriched all things with piety and greatly adorned the Church,
and worthily found Christ God,//
Who grants His great mercy to all.

Tone 7 – Kontakion of the Resurrection

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers.
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry:
“The Savior has come to those in faith; //
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

Tone 4 – Kontakion of Sts. Athanasius and Cyril

Athanasius and Cyril, great hierarchs of true piety, and noble
champions of the Church of Christ,
Preserve all who sing: //
“O Compassionate Lord, save those who honor You!”

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 7 – Prokeimenon (Psalm 28)

The Lord shall give strength to His people.
The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1.15-17 (Sunday)

My Son: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen

Gospel: Luke 18.35-43 (Sunday)

At that time it happened, as Jesus was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So, they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

So, Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

He said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.”

And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Nikolay Kostromin

Gilbert Rodriguez

Edna Hudacin

Ev. Mem. Paul Sosnitsky (1928)

Anna Visotsky (1927)

Mary Maliniak (1929)

Andrew Izhak (1934)

Andrew Vasnitich (1957)

Anastasia Shawkun (1976)

John Sawochka (1984)

John Pirovsky (1987)

Joseph Kostelnik (1994)

Anna Holub (2007)

Anna Lickar (2008)

Galina Meuch (2025)

Thomas Mozak (2023)

Health & Salvation

Archpr. Peter

Mat. Cynthia

Hierom. John

Mat. Anne

Nun Theodora

Rollie

Claudia

Mary Ann

Raymond

Edward

Charlotte

Betsy

Klaudia

Maja

Gerald

Janet

Gerald

Rebecca

Christopher

Moses

Helena

James

Elijah

Lydia

Nina

James

Rebecca

Jesse

Autumn

James

John

Jacob

Carol

Snezana

Ryan

Nathan

Kara

Sarah

Jamie

Kyleigh

Lauren

Kyle

Carolynn

Amelia

Aaron

Marcietta

Charles

Rosemary

Nicholas

Natalie

Jovan

Meagan

Kimberly

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Stephanie | Isabella | John |
| Robin | Alessandra | Kirby |
| Leonardo | Jennifer | Loretta |
| Daniel | Steven | Alex |
| Tiffany | Sergei | Trudi |
| Yelena | Heidi | Michal |
| Anastasia | Jennifer | Anika |
| James | Ethan | Sarah |
| Rita | Logan | Richard |
| Alla | Tanya | Christine |
| Betty | Christopher | Mira |
| Mary Ann | Olga | Joseph |
| Maria | Michael | Jaroslava |
| Londyn | Ivanka | Cameron |
| Hattie | Christine | Regina |
| Lisa | Sara | Seraphim |

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, 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 **1-year memorial for Gail Meuch** and the **3-year memorial for Tom Mosak**.

For **Bible Study** tomorrow, please read 2 Chronicles 16-20.

Every year, **Orthodox Christian homes are blessed with the new holy water of Theophany**. House blessings will continue until the start of Great Lent. The digital schedule to book an appointment was emailed to the parish last week. A paper version is also available in the narthex.

PTVM is partnering with the **Telos Project** (a CrossRoad initiative) to grow our young adult ministry. Next **Saturday, January 24 at 4:30pm** the whole parish is encouraged to attend a meeting led by our Telos Project coach to learn about and help us kick off this endeavor. Food will be provided. Join us as we strengthen our parish through intergenerational conversation and fellowship.

Annual reports are due today to Fr Jacob or to Council President Melody Rozdelsky. The annual meeting will be February 15.

Mark your calendars:

Jan 19: Bible Study @ 7pm

Jan 20: Men's Breakfast at Bob Evans in Valpo @ 7:15am
Parish Council @7p,

Jan 23: Blood Drive 12-6pm

Jan 24: TELOS meeting for young adult ministry @ 4:30pm

Feb 1: Festal Vespers for the Meeting of the Lord @ 1pm

Feb 2: Divine Liturgy for the Meeting of the Lord w/blessing of candles @ 9am

Feb 5: Women's Book Group @ 6pm

Feb 15: Annual Meeting after Liturgy

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$1,966

Having Your House Blessed

The homes of Orthodox Christians are blessed with the new holy water of Theophany each year. Make an appointment with the priest to come to your house. He will bring holy water and a sprinkling brush. The family supplies a bowl, a candle, and an icon (any icon of Christ will do). The family should also make a list of living and departed family, who will be remembered during the service. The bowl, candle, and icon should be placed on a clean table. Lights throughout the house should be turned on, paths should be

cleared for walking through the house, and radios and televisions should be turned off.

The priest begins the service with the Trisagion prayers (all are welcome to pray along) and a short prayer of blessing. After this, a member of the family takes the candle and leads the priest and everyone else in procession through the home. As they go, the priest sprinkles holy water and all sing continuously the Troparion of Theophany ("When You, O Lord, were baptized..."). After the entire home is blessed, the procession returns again to the icon, and a short litany is said for the welfare of the family.

Sometimes the family wants to give the priest a little something to eat; depending on the time the priest has, he may stay and visit. It is NEVER expected that the family will give him money. The scripture tells us "Freely you have received, freely give". The priest comes to the home because he wants God's blessing to be upon it and to know those in his flock better and to be available to them.

**Glory to God for
all things!**