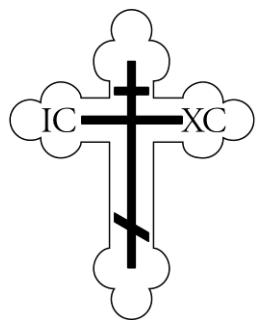
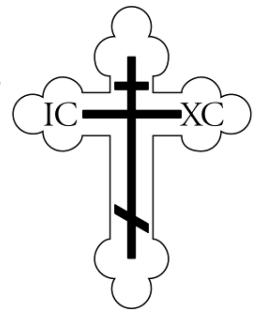


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America



8600 Grand Blvd.
Merrillville, IN
(219)947-4748
www.ptvm.com

Rev. Dr. Jacob Van Sickle
(219)384-6826 • frjacovansickle@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.

January 4, 2025

Forefeast of Theophany

Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles

In Luke 10:1-17, the Lord appointed seventy men to go out as missionaries—as Apostles. Though not so prominent as the Twelve, the Church confirms that the Seventy remained true to the Lord and their calling, fulfilling a vital role in the spread of the Gospel. These were not random choices or accidental volunteers but true Disciples and Apostles, whose labors carried the message of their Lord throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Though lists of the Seventy vary somewhat, all these men are remembered on the calendar of the Church. January 4 is set aside to

remember them all, and the record of their work is preserved in accounts handed down through the centuries from place to place, especially in those locations where they labored. To tell all the stories passed down in the Church concerning the Seventy would fill a book of considerable size, but the stories of a few will convey the conviction and faith of this illustrious body.

Barnabas, a Jew of the Tribe of Levi, was born in Cyprus of wealthy parents. He is said to have studied under Gamaliel with Saul of Tarsus, who was to become Paul the Apostle. Originally named Joseph, he was called Barnabas (Son of Consolation) by the Apostles (Acts 4:36) because he had a rare gift of comforting people's hearts. He sought out Paul when everyone else was afraid of him, bringing him to the Apostles. It was Barnabas whom the Apostles first sent to Antioch with Paul. Their long association was broken only when Barnabas was determined to take his cousin Mark, whom Paul did not trust just then, on a missionary journey. The three were later reconciled (Col. 4:10). Many ancient accounts say Barnabas was the first to preach in Rome and in Milan, but he was martyred in Cyprus and then buried by Mark at the Western Gate of the city of Salamis.

Also among the more prominent of the Seventy was the Apostle Titus, whom Paul called his brother (2 Cor 12:18) and his son (Titus 1:4), educated in Greek philosophy, but after reading the Prophet Isaiah he began to doubt the value of all he had been taught. Hearing the news of the coming of Jesus Christ, he joined some others from His works, the young Titus joined those who followed Him. Baptized by the Apostle Paul, he worked with and served the great Apostle to the Gentiles, traveling with him until Paul sent him to Crete in Greece, making him bishop of that city. It is said that Titus was in Rome at the time of the beheading of Saint Paul and that he buried his body of his spiritual father before returning home. Back in Crete, he converted and baptized many people, governing the Church on that island until he entered into rest at the age of ninety-four.

Many less prominent among the Seventy also labored for Christ unto death. Aristarchus, whom Saint Paul mentions several times (Acts 19:29; Col. 4:10) calling him a "fellow laborer," became bishop of Apamea in Syria. Sosthenes (Acts 18:17; I Col. 1:1) became bishop of Caesarea and Tychicus (Acts 2:4; Eph. 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Titus 3:12) succeeded him in that city, Simeon (Mat 13:53; Mark 6:3), son of Cleopas (who was the brother of Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin Mary), succeeded James as bishop of Jerusalem. Aristovoulos (Romans 16:10), the brother of the Apostle Barnabas, preached the Gospel in Britain and died peacefully there.

The lives of these few are quite representative of the Seventy, who were instrumental to plant the Church throughout the world. Many became bishops, but the names of all are numbered in heaven in the Book of Life as faithful servants of the Lord, Apostles and foundations of the Church.

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 4 – Troparion of the Forefeast

Prepare, O Zebulon, and adorn yourself, O Naphtali! River Jordan, cease flowing, and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized! Adam, rejoice with our first Mother, and do not hide yourselves as you did of old in Paradise; for having seen you naked, He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment.// Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

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 – Troparion of the 70 Apostles

Holy Apostles of the Seventy entreat the merciful God // to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions!

Tone 5 – Resurrectional Kontakion

You descended into hell, O my Savior,
shattering its gates as Almighty,
resurrecting the dead as Creator,
and destroying the sting of death.

You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, //
and we cry to You: “O Lord, save us!”

Tone 4 – Kontakion of the Forefeast

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John:
“Do not be afraid to baptize Me. //
For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man.”

Tone 2 – Kontakion of the Apostles

O faithful, let us praise with hymns
the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ.
They have taught us all to worship the undivided Trinity,
for they are divine lamps of the faith.

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 6 – Prokeimenon of the Forefeast (Psalm 27)

O Lord, save Your people, / and bless Your inheritance!

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4.5-8 (Sunday Before Theophany)

My Son: Be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Gospel: Matthew 1.1-8 (Sunday Before Theophany)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.’”

John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Nikolay Kostromin

Gilbert Rodriguez

Edna Hudacin

Ev. Mem. Christ Ternov (1914)

Lavrenty Shawkun (1919)

Katharine Karnets (1931)

Sergei Buiny (1951)

Lidia Saliwonczyk (1988)

Ann Frentzko (1990)

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

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

There will be **no Bible Study** tomorrow, because of the **Theophany Vigil**.

A reminder to our **greeters** to **please stay a bit into coffee hour** for a meeting with Fr Jacob.

2025 stewardship receipts are ready for pick-up in the Narthex.

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 will be emailed to the parish later this week. A paper version will also be made available in the narthex beginning next Sunday.

To kick off house blessing season this year, **everyone is invited to Fr. Jacob and Mat. Jenna's home next Sunday afternoon at 2pm**. We will start with the house blessing and continue the open house until 5pm. Food and drink are provided. Please bring nothing with you!

PTVM is partnering with the **Telos Project** (a CrossRoad initiative) to grow our young adult ministry. On **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.

It is time again for the various committees and ministries to submit your **annual reports for the parish meeting**. Please submit them either to Fr Jacob or to Council President Melody Rozdelsky no later than January 18. The annual meeting will be February 15.

Mark your calendars:

Jan 5: **Royal Hours of Theophany @ 9am**
Vigil of Theophany @ 7pm

Jan 6: **Festal Divine Liturgy with the Blessing of Water @ 9am**

Jan 8: **Guys' Night Out at Maxim's in Merrillville @ 6pm**

Jan 10: **Women's Event at Yesterday's Treasures @ 12pm**

Jan 11: **Open House Blessing at the Van Sickles' in Winfield 2-4pm**

Jan 13: **Men's Breakfast at Bob Evans in Valpo @ 7:15am**

Jan 17: **Catechism @ 4:30pm**

Jan 23: **Blood Drive 12-6pm**

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

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$8,064

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 and icon should be placed on a clean table with a cloth on it. 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 (here the listed names will be mentioned).

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!