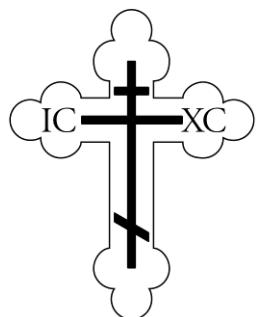
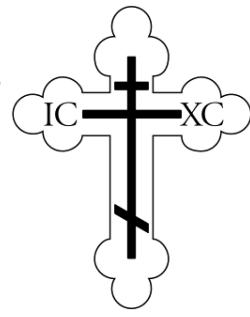


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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.

February 1, 2026

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee Forefeast of the Meeting of the Lord

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the first Sunday of a three-week period prior to the commencement of Great Lent. It marks the beginning of a time of preparation for the spiritual journey of Lent, a time for Orthodox Christians to draw closer to

God through worship, prayer, fasting, and acts of charity. It is also on this day that the Triodion is introduced, a liturgical book that contains the services from this Sunday, the tenth before Pascha, to Great and Holy Saturday.

The theme of the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee is repentance. Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the starting point of the journey to Pascha. To repent signifies far more than self-pity or futile regret over things done in the past. The Greek term *metanoia* means “change of mind.” To repent is to be renewed, to be transformed in our inward viewpoint, to attain a fresh way of looking at our relationship with God and with others. The fault of the Pharisee is that he has no desire to change his outlook; he is complacent, self-satisfied, and so he allows no place for God to act within him. The Gospel depicts him as a man that is pleased only with himself who thinks that he has complied with all of the requirements of religion. But in his pride, he has falsified the meaning of true religion and faith. He has reduced these to external observations, measuring his piety by the amount of money he gives.

The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a “change of mind.” He humbles himself, and his humility justifies him before God. He becomes, in the words of the Sermon on the Mount “poor in spirit.” He acknowledges that he is a sinner, and he knows that salvation is only found in the mercy of God. Here we find an example of true humility, an essential aspect of repentance. A “change of mind” and the transformation of our lives can only happen when we humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our willingness to turn from sin, and receive His grace into our lives.

Our preparation for Lent thus begins with a prayer for humility, the beginning of true repentance. Through repentance, we can find and return to the true order of things, a restoration of our spiritual vision that will guide us in a very difficult and challenging world. By entering Great Lent in humility and repentance, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness and He blesses by guiding us to greater spiritual heights.

The week that follows the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee is designated by the Church as a non-fasting week. All foods are allowed on everyday of the week, including Wednesday and Friday.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 1 – Resurrectional Troparion

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body,
You rose on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Your Kingdom!//
Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

Tone 1 – Troparion of the Forefeast

The celestial choir of heavenly Angels
bends down to the earth
and sees the First-born of all creation
being carried into the Temple as a babe by a mother who has not
known man,
and in amazement sings with us//
a prefestal hymn

Tone 4 – Kontakion for the Publican & Pharisee

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee!
Let us learn humility from the Publican's tears!
Let us cry to our Savior:
“Have mercy on us,//
O only merciful One!”

Tone 6 – Kontakion of the Forefeast

The Word unseen with the Father,
now is seen in the flesh, ineffably born of the Virgin,
and is given into the arms of the priest and Elder.//
Let us worship Him, our True God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 1 –Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 32)

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us
as we have set our hope on You!

Epistle: 2 Timothy 3.10-15

My son: You have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Luke 18.10-14

Jesus spoke this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’

“And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Nickolai Resunenko
Jovan Savich
Lori Shaffer
Nikolay Kostromin
Gilbert Rodriguez

Ev. Mem. Michael Paulisin ('56)
Peter Novak ('63)
John Pilnock ('67)
John Prokopovich ('83)
Daniel Julovich (2011)
Dorsey Shiplov (2013)

Health & Salvation
Archpr. Peter
Mat. Cynthia
Hierom. John
Mat. Anne
Valer

Nun Theodora
Rollie
Claudia
Mary Ann
Raymond
Edward

Charlotte
Betsy
Klaudia
Maja
Gerald
Janet

Gerald	Amelia	Steven
Rebecca	Aaron	Sergei
Christopher	Marcietta	Heidi
Moses	Charles	Jennifer
Helena	Rosemary	Ethan
James	Nicholas	Logan
Elijah	Natalie	Tanya
Lydia	Meagan	Christopher
Nina	Kimberly	Olga
Ezra	Stephanie	Michael
James	Robin	Sara
Rebecca	Leonardo	John
Jesse	Daniel	Kirby
Autumn	Tiffany	Loretta
James	Yelena	Alex
John	Anastasia	Trudi
Jacob	James	Michal
Carol	Rita	Anika
Snezana	Alla	Sarah
Ryan	Betty	Richard
Nathan	Mary Ann	Christine
Kara	Maria	Mira
Sarah	Londyn	Joseph
Jamie	Hattie	Jaroslava
Kyleigh	Lisa	Cameron
Lauren	Isabella	Regina
Kyle	Alessandra	Matthew
Carolynn	Jennifer	

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.

O Lord our God, who are rich in mercy and compassionate in Your love for mankind, look down with kindness upon Your servants. Remove from our hearts all bitterness, wrath, and remembrance of wrongs. Quench every spark of hatred, dissolve every bond of enmity, and plant within us the spirit of peace and mutual understanding. Grant that we may not seek our own will but learn to bear one another's burdens in humility and truth. Heal those divided from one another, reconcile those at odds, and make us instruments of Your peace. O You who are the Giver of concord and the Savior of our souls, hearken and have mercy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After coffee hour today, we will return to the nave for **Vespers of the Meeting of the Lord**.

In memory of the Pharisee's boastfulness in fasting, **we forgo the usual Wednesday and Friday fast this week**. In place of fasting this week, the Typikon prescribes **reading the entire Gospel of Mark!**

During coffee the Ladies' Sodality will hold a **Soup Sale** to raise money for new altar boy robes.

For **Bible Study** tomorrow, read 2 Chronicles 25-27.

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. A paper version is available in the narthex.

Our **Church School** is having their **annual Bowling Event!** Join us at Stardust in Merrillville after coffee hour next Sunday, February 8 to hit the lanes and have some pizza! The church will pick up the tab for the children. Adults are also welcome to join in the fun.

Parish Annual Reports have been published to the parish website at www.ptvm.com/category/annual-reports/. Hard copies are available in the narthex. The meeting will be held February 15 after our Meatfare potluck.

Mark your calendars:

Feb 2: **Divine Liturgy for the Meeting of the Lord @ 9am**
Bible Study @ 7pm

Feb 5: **Women's Book Group @ 6pm**

Feb 8: **Church School Bowling Event after Liturgy**

Feb 14: **General Panikhida** at 5pm before Vespers for the first Memorial Saturday of the year.

Feb 15: **Annual Meeting** after Liturgy and a **Meatfare Potluck**

Feb 22: **Forgiveness Vespers** after coffee hour

Feb 23: **Clean Monday** (beginning of Great Lent)

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$1,410

Minneapolis Prayer for Peace

A message from His Eminence, our Archbishop Daniel

Beloved in the Lord,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In these days, our hearts are heavy as we witness civil unrest in the city of Minneapolis, and the deep distress that weighs upon many communities throughout our nation. When fear, anger, and suspicion take root, they wound not only those in the public square but also the inner life of the human person. As shepherds and faithful alike, we must not allow turmoil to harden our hearts or diminish our love for one another.

The Church has always responded to such moments not first with argument, but with prayer—prayer that lifts the burden of suffering to God, prayer that softens what has grown rigid, prayer that opens a path toward repentance, reconciliation, and peace. I therefore ask every parish, every household, and every believer to set aside time for earnest prayer in the days ahead.

Let us pray for those who are frightened, for those who are angry, for those who feel unheard, and for those whose trust has been broken. Let us pray for civic leaders and all entrusted with responsibility, that they may be guided by wisdom, restraint, and a sincere desire for the common good.

Let us pray especially that the Lord will quiet the passions that inflame division and will protect all who dwell in places marked by unrest.

Above all, let us pray for the healing of enmity, for hostility is a spiritual illness that cannot be cured by force or rhetoric, but only by the grace of God. In this spirit, I offer the following prayer, drawn from the mind of the Church and her *Book of Needs*, for use in our homes and parishes:

O Lord our God, who are rich in mercy and compassionate in Your love for mankind, look down with kindness upon Your servants. Remove from our hearts all bitterness, wrath, and remembrance of wrongs. Quench every spark of hatred, dissolve every bond of enmity, and plant within us the spirit of peace and mutual understanding. Grant that we may not seek our own will, but learn to bear one another's burdens in humility and truth. Heal those divided from one another, reconcile those at odds, and make us instruments of Your peace, for You are the Giver of concord and the Savior of our souls, and to You we give glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Beloved, the work of peace begins in the heart. May our prayer become repentance, our repentance become love, and our love become a quiet witness to the kingdom of God in the midst of a troubled world.

With archpastoral love and prayer,

DANIEL
Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest

**Glory to God for
all things!**