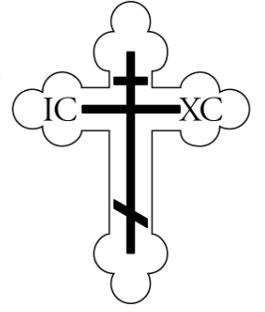
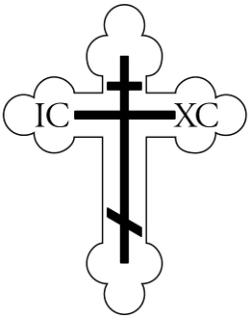


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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 22, 2025

4th Sunday of Great Lent:

St John Climacus (of the Ladder)

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

Saint John went to Sinai when he was sixteen, submitting to Abba Martyrius as his instructor and guide. After four years, Saint John was tonsured as a monk. Abba Strategios, who was present at Saint John's tonsure, predicted that he would become a great luminary in the Church of Christ.

For nineteen years Saint John progressed in monasticism in obedience to his spiritual Father. After the death of Abba Martyrius, Saint John embarked on a solitary life, settling in a wild place called Thola, where he spent forty years laboring in silence, fasting, prayer, and tears of penitence.

Concealing his ascetic deeds from others, Saint John sometimes withdrew into a cave, but reports of his holiness spread far beyond the vicinity. Visitors from all walks of life came to him, desiring to hear his words of edification and salvation. After forty years of solitary asceticism, he was chosen as igumen of Sinai when he was seventy-five. Saint John governed the holy monastery for four years. Toward the end of his life, the Lord granted him the gifts of clairvoyance and wonderworking.

At the request of Saint John of the Raithu monastery, he wrote the incomparable *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, from which he is called “of the Ladder” (Climacus). It is a book of instruction for monks who wish to attain spiritual perfection. Although the book was written for monks, any Christian living in the world will find it an unerring guide for ascending to God, and a support in the spiritual life.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 8 – Resurrectional Troparion

You descended from on high, O Merciful One!

You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to You!

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 to St John Climacus

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,

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

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 4 – Kontakion to St John Climacus

The Lord truly set you on the heights of abstinence,

to be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe!//

O our father and teacher John.

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 8 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 75)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God!

Tone 7 – Prokeimenon for St John Climacus (Psalm 149)

Let the saints exult in glory; / let them sing for joy on their couches!

Epistle: Hebrews 6.13-20 (Sunday)

Brethren: when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Ephesians 5.9-19 (St John Climacus)

Brethren: The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore, He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Gospel: Mark 9.17-31 (Sunday)

At that time, one of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So, I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”

Jesus answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.”

Then they brought him to Jesus. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

So, Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood. And often it has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”

Immediately, the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!”

Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.”

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”

So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

Matthew 4.25 – 5.12 (St John Climacus)

At that time, great multitudes followed Him – from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| N.Dep. Patriarch Ilia (of Georgia) | Michael Alexeychuck (1967) |
| Richard Mirr | John Swalla (1985) |
| Dalton Richards | John Puskos (1988) |
| Bp. Seraphim (Sigrist) | Michael Marchuk (2019) |
| Ev. Mem. Geroge Dormichoff ('54) | David May (2023) |
| Andrew Najmolovsky (1962) | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Health & Salvation | Maja | Jesse |
| Archpr. Peter | Gerald | Autumn |
| Mat. Cynthia | Janet | James |
| Hierom. John | Gerald | John |
| Mat. Anne | Rebecca | Jacob |
| Valer | Christopher | Carol |
| Nun Theodora | Moses | Snezana |
| Rollie | Helena | Ryan |
| Claudia | James | Nathan |
| Mary Ann | Elijah | Kara |
| Raymond | Lydia | Sarah |
| Edward | Nina | Jamie |
| Charlotte | Ezra | Kyleigh |
| Betsy | James | Lauren |
| Klaudia | Rebecca | Kyle |

Carolynn
Amelia
Aaron
Marcietta
Charles
Rosemary
Nicholas
Natalie
Meagan
Kimberly
Stephanie
Robin
Leonardo
Daniel

Tiffany
Yelena
Anastasia
Christine
Mira
Joseph
Jaroslava
Cameron
Regina
Matthew
Cindy
Aisha
Don
Patricia

Charlette
Elias
Shaun
Cecilia
Mat. Katherine
Rita
Kenneth
Alla
Maria
Ethan
Logan
Joseph

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, Iran and the Middle East. We pray for Your peace and Your mercy in the midst of the great suffer-ing 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 a **memorial for David May** (2-year), **Michael Marchuk** (7-year), and **John Puskos** (38-year).

The **Chicago Deanery Lenten Vespers** return at 6pm on Sundays:

March 22 at St George Cathedral in Chicago

March 29 at St Elizabeth in Chesterton

April 5 Bridegroom Matins at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago

This Saturday, Janet Korzow will teach **Pysanki-making** classes.

There are two times available: 9am - 12pm & 12:30 - 3pm. **Sign up today in the narthex.**

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 Liturgies, if necessary.

Once again this Lent, PTVM will deliver **Easter ham dinner baskets** to the **Ross Township food pantry** for local families in need. **Please remember to bring in the items you are donating for the baskets no later than Sunday, March 29th, Thank you!**

St. Clement's is having their Pascha Bake Sale! Grab an order form in the vestibule and make sure to get your orders into Elizabeth Pedersen by Wednesday, March 25th.

Mark your calendars:

Mar 24: Vigil of Annunciation @ 7pm

Mar 25: Annunciation Vesperal Divine Liturgy @ 6pm

Mar 26: Great Cannon with the Life of St. Mary of Egypt @10am

Mar 27: Presanctified Liturgy @ 9am
Red Cross Blood Drive 12pm-6pm

Mar 28: Pysanki Making Classes 9-12 & 12:30-3:30
Catechism @ 4:30pm

Mar 29: Bake Sale pick-up after Divine Liturgy

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$4,673

Memory Eternal

Patriarch Ilia of Georgia

With deep sorrow and in the hope of the Resurrection, the Orthodox Church in America joins the Georgian Orthodox Church in mourning the falling asleep of His Holiness Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, who reposed in the Lord on March 17, 2026 at the age of 93.

Elected Catholicos-Patriarch on December 25, 1977, His Holiness shepherded the Georgian Orthodox Church through many years of change, particularly in the period leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union and its aftermath. During his ministry, many

churches and monasteries were restored or newly established, theological education in the country was revived, and the life of the Orthodox Church in Georgian society was strengthened.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon sent a letter of condolence to His Eminence Metropolitan Shio, Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, which reads:

Your Eminence, beloved brother and concelebrant in the Lord's Mysteries,

I write to express my heartfelt condolences to Your Eminence and to the Holy Synod, clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Georgian Orthodox Church on the repose of your beloved Primate, His Holiness Patriarch Ilia II.

His Holiness' long and remarkable tenure as Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia stands as a profound witness to faithfulness, perseverance, and pastoral love. For decades, he guided the Georgian Church through times of great trial and renewal, preserving her unity, strengthening her witness, and nurturing the spiritual life of her faithful. His ministry bore enduring fruit not only within Georgia, but throughout the Orthodox world, where he was widely recognized as a father among hierarchs and a steadfast confessor of the Orthodox faith.

Throughout his life, His Holiness exemplified the Gospel he proclaimed. His humility, wisdom, and deep love for Christ and His Church inspired generations of clergy and faithful. In his person, many encountered a living testimony to the enduring strength of the Orthodox Church and her sacred tradition.

The Orthodox Church in America joins you in mourning his passing while giving thanks to God for his life and ministry. His Holiness will be remembered with gratitude and reverence by our clergy and faithful, who have long held him in high esteem.

Please be assured of my prayers for the blessed repose of his soul. May the Lord grant rest to His faithful servant in a place of light, a place of green pasture, a place of refreshment, where there is no pain, sorrow, or sighing, but life everlasting.

May his memory be eternal!

Your brother in Christ,

+Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada