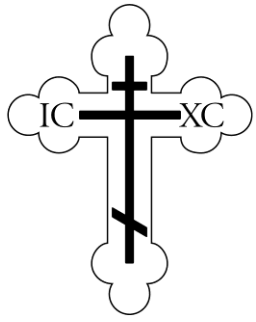
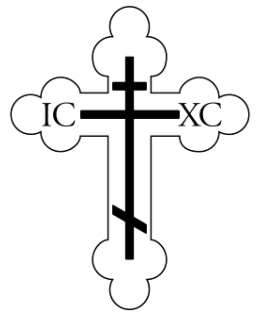


# Protection of the Virgin Mary



## Orthodox Church



A Parish of the  
Diocese of Chicago  
and the Midwest  
Orthodox Church  
in America



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Merrillville, IN 46410  
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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  
Confessions are heard before or  
after Vespers or by appointment.

**Welcome visitors!  
Please join us in the  
parish hall after  
Divine Liturgy for  
coffee hour.**

## December 8, 2019 Fourth Sunday of Advent St. Patapius of Thebes (4<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.)

St. Patapius was born at Thebes into a pious Christian family. Reaching the age of maturity, he scorned the vanities of the world and so went into the Egyptian desert where he became known for his ascetic deeds. Though he wished to dwell in silence, people began to come to him for advice. He went eventually to Constantinople, where he obtained a cell at the city wall, near the Blachernae church. But here, too, he quickly became known. He was given the gift of healing, so the sick began to throng about him, and he began to help all the needy. After a life adorned with virtue and miracles, St. Patapius fell asleep in the Lord. His relics reside at a women's monastery dedicated to his memory in Loutraki, Greece.

# 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 8 – Troparion for St. Patapius**

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Father,

for you took up the Cross and followed Christ.

By so doing you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes away

but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal.//

Therefore your spirit, venerable Patapius, rejoices with the Angels.

## **Tone 8 – Resurrectional Kontakion**

For our sake You were born of the Virgin

and endured crucifixion, O Good One, destroying death by death.

Revealing the Resurrection as God, do not despise the work of

Your hand!

Reveal Your love for man, O Merciful One, and accept the

Theotokos praying for us,//

and save the despairing people, O our Savior!

## **Tone 3 – Kontakion for St. Patapius**

Your temple is found to be a source of healing,

and the people flock to it eagerly, O saint.

They seek the healing of their diseases

and the forgiveness of their sins,//

for you are a protector for all those in need, ven'erable Patápius.

### **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!

### **Epistle: Ephesians 4.1-6**

Brethren: I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

### **Gospel: Luke 17.12-19**

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.

Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

And He said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has saved you."

# WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

**N.Dep.** Martin Svihra

Pr. George Pappas

Madeline Petri

**Ev.Mem** Timothy Ivanov ('26)

Konstantin Onufrey ('26)

Paul Stoycoff ('51)

Samuel Brich ('52)

William Dudak ('53)

William Lopeka ('67)

Mary Uskert (2001)

Anatol Meuch

**Health &**

**Salvation:**

Mat. Anna

Archpr. Peter

Pr. John

Pr. Christopher

Mat. Jennifer

Andrew

Gideon

Kevin

Jon

Tanya

Jovan

Julia

Warren

Carol

Tom

Elizabeth

Tina

Brittany

Jennifer

Lennox

Laila

Paula

Stacey

Jeramie

Olivia

Parker

Melissa

Jonathan

Matthew

Shaun

Gail

Maria

Barbara

Thomas

Carol

Jessica

Eduardo

Christine

Tom

Nicholas

Natalie

Barbara

Kristin

Linda

Phyllis

Kay

Fred

Larry

Rollie

Joseph

Martin

Mark

Alexa

Paula

Alexandra

James

Joanne

Ronald

Michael

Joseph

Rachel

Kathleen

Paul

William

Michael

Frederick

Janet

N.Ill. Tasia

Jeffrey

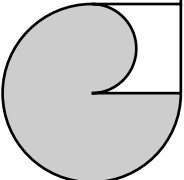
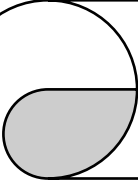
Greta

Michael

Courtney

Lea

\*If you know someone who needs prayer, please give their name to Fr Jacob



*This Nativity night bestowed peace on the whole world, so let no one threaten. This is the night of the most gentle One; let no one be cruel. This is the night of the Humble One; let no one be proud. Now is the day of joy; let us not revenge. Now is the day of good will; let us not be mean. In this day of Peace, let us not be conquered by anger. Today the Bountiful impoverished Himself for our sake; so, you who are rich, invite the poor to your table. Today we receive a Gift for which we did not ask; so let us give alms to those who implore and beg us. This Day cast open the heavenly doors for our prayers; let us open our door to those who ask our forgiveness. Today the Divine Being took upon Himself the seal of our humanity, in order for humanity to be decorated by the seal of Divinity.*

*– Nativity Sermon of St. Isaac the Syrian*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Thank you to those who helped yesterday with our **Church School St. Nicholas celebration**. We purchased gifts and/or groceries for three different families in need this year.

We have a **rental in the hall** this afternoon. Please help us clean up coffee hour by 1pm.

**Angel Tree** items should have been brought to the Church today for delivery to the Township Office. If you took a card but need more time, please let Fr Jacob or Melody know.

This evening at 7pm, Fr Jacob will serve an **Advent Compline** service in the **Valparaiso University Chapel** for the student **Orthodox Christian Fellowship**. All are welcome.

For **Bible Study** this week, please read **Numbers 22-25**.

Consider making a **flower donation** to help us beautify the Church for Christmas. Envelopes are in your stewardship box.

Next Sunday will be the last opportunity to **order your gift cards through our Scrip program** and have them by Christmas. Remember, a percentage of your gift card purchase supports this Church. Also, if you do any shopping through Amazon, you can begin at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and select "Protection of the Virgin Mary Church" as your charity of choice.

We are now half-way through **Advent**, 40 days of intensive **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving** to prepare to receive the new-born Christ. This is also a good time to make a **confession**.

Beautiful Icon **Christmas Cards** are available in the Bookstore.

### **Mark your calendars:**

**Dec 9: Hall Committee meeting @ 6:30pm**

**Parish Council meeting @ 7:30pm**

**Dec 10: Ladies' Sodality @ 10am**

**Dec 11: Bible Study @ 7pm**

**Dec 12: Faith Enrichment @ 10am**

**Dec 14: No Great Vespers.** Fr Jacob and family are on vacation.

**Dec 19: Christmas Caroling** at Descent of the Holy Ghost @ 6:30pm

**Dec 24: Vespereal Liturgy of the Nativity of Christ @ 10am**

**Vigil of the Nativity of Christ @ 6pm**

**Dec 25: Divine Liturgy of the Nativity of Christ @ 9am**

**Dec 29: Christmas Yolka and pot-luck luncheon** after Liturgy

**Last week's offerings to the Lord: \$1,234**

# A Reflection on the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

by His Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon

The feast of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ is a reminder to all of us that “heaven and earth today make glad prophetically” and angels and men “keep spiritual feast for God, born of a woman, has appeared in the flesh to those that sit in darkness and shadow.” The light that we receive with Christ’s birth is not merely a physical light that pierces the gloom which surrounds us, but rather a transfiguring light that both reveals God’s love for us and inspires us to grow in our love for God.

There is no philosophy or ideology that can overcome the irrationality of the world. It is only the transfiguring light of Christ – His divine and sacrificial love – that can accomplish this. It is only through love that we can, with the animals and the manger, “accept Him who by His Word has loosed us dwellers on earth from acts that are against reason.” When we despair at the tragedies in the world and in our lives, let us remember that it is precisely in the midst of such darkness that the Word of God chose to be incarnate.

Archimandrite Zacharias suggests that “when we are confronted by the ruins of human love and find ourselves completely broken, then two solutions can be given: either we turn to God with our pain, so that God enters our life and renews us, or we continue to be deceived by our human plans and slide from one tragedy and barrenness of soul to another, hoping that one day we will find perfection.”

The world longs for authentic love but seems to remain mired in the global tragedies that we witness every day. In our horizontal and human relations with one another, what is missing is God Himself, a third and divine-human Person to purify and heal our imperfect and broken relationships. Whether it be husband and wife, brother and sister, or larger

communities, true love and abiding peace can only be found through our communion with God.

In our Orthodox context, this takes place through the Divine Liturgy and through our efforts to nurture the sacrificial love of God in our own hearts. “Paradise begins on earth through love for God and love for our fellows. In this lies the entire wealth of eternal life, for man has been created to give eternal glory to God. His delight is to return this glory to His image, man, who then returns greater glory to his Creator.”

The feast of the Nativity is a reminder that it is through this cycle of glorification and love between God and man that we find our true fulfillment. May the new-born Christ grant us the courage to keep His love in our hearts, to connect with our fellows through prayer, sacrifice, and humility, and to remember that, no matter the degree of our own brokenness or the brokenness of the world, Christ has come to give us hope for renewal, “for what He was, He has remained, true God: and what He was not, He has taken upon Himself, becoming man through love for mankind.”

With love in Christ,

+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of all America and Canada

**Glory to God for all things!**