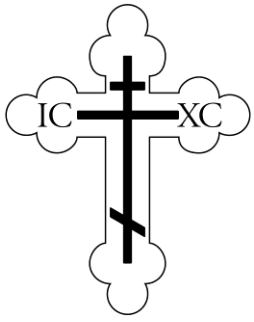
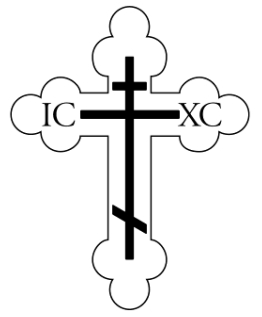


Protection of the Virgin Mary



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

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.**

March 1, 2020

Forgiveness Sunday - Cheesefare

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ: “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses...” (Mt 6:14-15).

Then, after Vespers, which liturgically brings us into Lent, we ask forgiveness from each other in the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. We approach each of our brothers or sisters in Christ and ask forgiveness of any sins we have

committed against them. They ask the same of us, and we each pronounce our forgiveness of the other. It is traditional to exchange the kiss of peace and conclude with the words, "God forgives all." Meanwhile, the choir sings hymns from Pascha, filling the church with the anticipation of Easter joy.

Forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us, so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten season.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns, we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me – we begin to realize that it is Christ Who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery – and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists – we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year, "opens to us the doors of Paradise." We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage. Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting true fasting; our effort true effort; our reconciliation with God true reconciliation.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 4 – Resurrectional Troparion

When the women disciples of the Lord
learned from the angel the joyous message of Your resurrection,
they cast away the ancestral curse
and elatedly told the apostles:

“Death is overthrown!

Christ our God is risen,//

granting the world great mercy!”

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 6 – Kontakion of Forgiveness

O Master, Teacher of wisdom,

Bestower of virtue,

Who teach the thoughtless and protect the poor,
strengthen and enlighten my heart!

O Word of the Father,

let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You:

“Have mercy on me, a transgressor,//

O merciful Lord!”

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 –Prokeimenon (Psalm 75)

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

Epistle: Romans 13.11 - 14.4

Brethren: Do this, knowing the time—that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent; the day is at hand! Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Gospel: Matthew 6.14-21

Jesus said to His disciples: “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Ev.Mem George Tasseff ('14)
Tikhon Yaruta ('39)
John Bikoff ('46)

John Duvay ('69)
Phyllis Zayas ('78)
John Gooliak ('88)

Health & Salvation:

Archpr. Peter

Pr. John

Pr. Gregory

Mat. Beverly

Pr. Christopher

Mat. Jennifer

Andrew

Gideon

Dn. Nicholas

Kevin

Jon

Tanya

Jovan

Julia

Warren

Carol

Tom

Elizabeth

Tina

Brittany

Jennifer

Lennox

Laila

Paula

Melissa

Jonathan

Matthew

Gail

Maria

Stacy

Jeramie

Olivia

Parker

Barbara

Thomas

Jessica

Eduardo

Christine

Nicholas

Natalie

Barbara

Kristin

Linda

Phyllis

Kay

Fred

Larry

Rollie

Joseph

Mark

Alexa

Paula

James

Joanne

Michael

Joseph

Kathleen

Paul

William

Frederick

Janet

Lea

Hania

James

Gerald

N.II. Koen

Miriana

Nadia

Charlene

Milka

Daniel

Russell

Brendan

Benjamin

William

Kara

Nathan

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Plan to stay after coffee hour for **Forgiveness Vespers**: We enter Great Lent together, asking for the Lord's strength and forgiving one another every offense.

For Great Lent, the **women's book group** will read **The First Fruits of Prayer: A Forty-Day Journal through the Canon of St. Andrew**, by Frederica Mathewes-Green. Lunch and discussion will follow the 10am Presanctified Liturgy on the last day of Lent: Friday, April 10 (Western Good Friday).

Our church will host **Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers** this year for Northwest Indiana. Vespers is at 5pm with a dinner to follow. **Archimandrite Alexii Altschul** will be our guest Homilist. He is a convert to Orthodoxy, who served as a parish priest in Kansas City until the death of his wife. He became a monk on the Holy Mountain before returning to found Holy Archangel Michael & All Angels Skete in Weatherby, Missouri.

Our **Spring fashion show** "Tropical Paradise" will be Sunday, Mar 22 at Avalon Manor. Doors open at Noon with the Bake Sale. Luncheon is at 1:00 pm. Tickets are \$40.00 and NOT available at the door. This is our largest fundraiser of the year, so please be generous with basket donations (\$150.00 value), cash donations, checks (to PTVM Church), or Scrip to help defray the cost of the baskets that are raffled at the end of the show. Baskets and donations are due Sunday, Mar 1. Please see Elizabeth Pedersen, Sherry Mizamakoski, Rosemary Velasquez, or Nada Buczek for tickets and information.

For the month of March, O-Club is putting together **Easter Dinner Baskets** for the Ross Township food pantry. We need the following items: Canned vegetables, boxed potatoes (+gravy if mashed), and cake icing.

The O-Club is also organizing a **Lenten Soup Sale**. Quart and pint containers are available for pick-up during coffee hour. If you have a good Lenten soup recipe, please take a few containers and bring them back full on **Sunday, March 15**.

The **Ladies' Sodality** is collecting old but intact **eyeglasses** to be distributed by the Lions Club to those in need.

Mark your calendars:

Mar 2-5: **Great Canon of St. Andrew** Monday-Thursday @ 6pm

Mar 4: **Presanctified Liturgy** @ 10am

Mar 6: **Presanctified** at Descent of the Holy Ghost in Merrillville and St. Elizabeth's in Chesterton @ 6pm

Mar 8: **Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers** at our Church @ 5pm

Mar 22: **Spring Fashion Show** at Avalon Manor @ 1pm

Last week's offerings to the Lord: \$2,247

A Message from the Chancellor:

In the act of our liturgical gathering, Orthodox Christians, by the Grace of God, enact the sacred mystery of becoming the visible Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit forms and knits us together with other Orthodox Christians throughout the world, working with us and through us to fulfill the saving dispensation. Nothing can affect or change this sacred mystery. Indeed, according to the testimony of the Lord himself, he has established the Church and the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mt 16:17).

In recent days, the outbreak of COVID-19, known popularly as the Corona Virus, continues to generate interest in the media and cause feelings of fear and anxiety within society and our communities. At this point, the situation as it exists in the United States, Canada, and Mexico does not warrant extreme measures, as have been called for in other parts of the world. Nonetheless, it is important that our parish communities and their faithful be vigilant in keeping our parishes safe.

The best advice is for Churches to adopt common sense measures: members of the Church should become familiar with the symptoms of the virus (fever, cough, shortness of

breath), and, if these symptoms present themselves, both seek medical help immediately and self-quarantine. In terms of preventing the spread of this virus, again, the best advice is to adopt common sense practices: wash hands thoroughly and frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes, and avoid sharing personal items. Additionally, Church leaders should see to the routine cleaning of frequently touched objects such as, icons or the blessing cross.

In cities and communities where this virus is discovered, the diocesan bishop should be consulted for the blessing to adopt additional temporary measures to prevent the spread of disease in the context of liturgical gatherings.

Please note that in our efforts we should pay special attention to those who might be at risk of more serious complications from this virus: the young, the elderly, and those who already have respiratory or cardiac illnesses.

His Beatitude asks that all Orthodox Christians pray fervently that our Lord may comfort and heal those already affected by this virus, and grant strength and wisdom to those working to combat and control the virus. He also reminds the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America that plans and preparation to combat the spread of the virus should not inadvertently serve to isolate or stigmatize members of our communities. In fact, our common work should be an opportunity to come together, being united in purpose, and care for those who in need in imitation of our Great Physician of souls and bodies.

May our Lord, the Physician of our souls and bodies, grant us protection, health, and peace!

With the blessing of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America,

Archpriest Alexander Rentel

Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America,

Glory to God for all things!