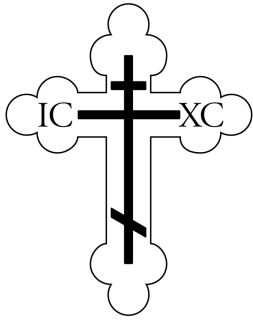
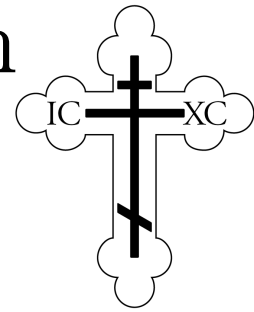


# Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



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



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## March 29, 2020 Sunday of St. John of the Ladder

Saint John of the Ladder is honored by Holy Church as a great ascetic and author of the renowned spiritual book called THE LADDER, from which he is called “of the Ladder” (Climacus). There is almost no information about Saint John’s origins. One tradition suggests that he was born in Constantinople around the year 570 and was the son of Sts Xenophon and Maria.

John went to Sinai when he was sixteen, submitting to Abba Martyrius as his instructor and guide. After four years, St John was tonsured as a monk. Abba Strategios, who was present at St John’s tonsure, predicted that he would become a great luminary in the Church of Christ. For nineteen years St John progressed in monasticism in obedience to his spiritual Father. After the death of Abba Martyrius, St

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, St 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. St John governed the holy monastery for four years. Toward the end of his life, the Lord granted him the gifts of clairvoyance and wonderworking.

Knowing of the wisdom and spiritual gifts of St John of Sinai, the igumen of the Raithu monastery requested him to write down whatever was necessary for the salvation of those in the monastic life. Such a book would be “a ladder fixed on the earth” (Gen. 28:12), leading people to the gates of Heaven. St John felt that such a task was beyond his ability, yet out of obedience he fulfilled the request. The saint called his work THE LADDER, for the book is “a fixed ladder leading from earthly things to the Holy of Holies...” The thirty steps of spiritual perfection correspond to the thirty years of the Lord’s age. When we have completed these thirty steps, we will find ourselves with the righteous and will not stumble. THE LADDER begins with renunciation of the world, and ends with God, who is love (1 John 4:8).

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. Sts Theodore the Studite, Sergius of Radonezh, Joseph of Volokolamsk, and others relied on THE LADDER as an important guide to salvation.

Some examples of St. John’s guidance in the spiritual life:

“A vain person seems to honor God but strives to please men rather than God.”

“People of lofty spirit bear insult placidly and willingly, but only the holy and righteous may hear praise without harm.”

“When you hear that your neighbor or friend has slandered you behind your back, or even to your face, praise and love him.”

“Whoever is proud of his natural gifts, intelligence, learning, skill in reading, clear enunciation, and other similar qualities, which are acquired without much labor, will never obtain supernatural gifts. Whoever is not faithful in small things (Luke 16:10), is also unfaithful in large things, and is vainglorious.”

“It often happens that God humbles the vainglorious, sending a sudden misfortune.”

*Due to stay-at-home orders from the civil authorities, and at the direction of our Bishop Paul, we will serve the Hours and Typica remotely instead of the Divine Liturgy*

## 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 1 – Troparion for St. John**

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 4 – Kontakion for St. John**

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden;  
it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross.  
The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished;  
for You, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell://  
“Enter again into Paradise!”

### **Tone 8 – Resurrectional Kontakion**

By rising from the tomb, You raised the dead and resurrected Adam.

Eve exults in Your Resurrection, //

and the world celebrates Your rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **Tone 8 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 75)**

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

### **Tone 7 – Prokeimenon for St. John (Psalm 149)**

Let the saints be exalted 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)**

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 to Jesus, "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."

He 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 Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"

And he said, "From childhood. And often he 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 (Sunday)**

At that time, great multitudes followed Jesus – 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**

Archpr. Peter

Pr. John

Pr. Christopher

Mat. Jennifer

Andrew

Gideon

Dn. Nicholas

Kevin

Jon

Tanya	Thomas	Paul
Jovan	Jessica	William
Julia	Eduardo	Frederick
Warren	Christine	Janet
Carol	Nicholas	Lea
Tom	Natalie	Hania
Elizabeth	Barbara	James
Tina	Kristin	Gerald
Brittany	Linda	Miriana
Jennifer	Phyllis	Nadia
Lennox	Kay	Charlene
Laila	Fred	Milka
Paula	Larry	Daniel
Melissa	Rollie	Russell
Jonathan	Joseph	Brendan
Matthew	Mark	Benjamin
Gail	Alexa	William
Maria	Paula	Kara
Stacy	James	Nathan
Jeramie	Joanne	Sharon
Olivia	Michael	Michael
Parker	Joseph	John
Barbara	Kathleen	Vern

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tomorrow evening at 7pm we will launch a **new weekly stay-at-home Bible Study** using the Zoom online meeting platform. If you are interested in joining, please email Fr Jacob. We will hold a practice run for joining the meeting this afternoon @ 2pm. If you aren't able to make that time but would still like to participate on Monday's, don't worry. Just let me know. We will start the study with St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

The open-air **Panikhida at St. Mary's cemetery** (4801 W Ridge Rd, Gary, IN), which had been scheduled for yesterday, was postponed due to weather until this Saturday, April 4 at 1pm. The general blessing of graves will follow. Parishioners are still welcome to add the names of their departed loved ones for commemoration by emailing them to [ptvmchurch@gmail.com](mailto:ptvmchurch@gmail.com). We will not go inside the chapel but pray outdoors among the graves, maintaining healthy distance between families.

For as long as we are meeting virtually during this health crisis, parishioners are asked to **continue their stewardship** to the Church either by mail or online through the "donate" button on our website: [ptvm.com](http://ptvm.com)

Our **Spring Fashion Show** has been postponed to Friday, May 29. Doors will open at 5pm. Dinner is at 6pm.

The **women's book group** is reading **The First Fruits of Prayer: A Forty-Day Journal through the Canon of St. Andrew**, by Frederica Mathewes-Green. Discussion is scheduled for Friday, April 10 (Western Good Friday). Stay tuned for a possible rescheduling.

### Mark your calendars:

Mar 30: **Stay-at-home Bible Study @ 7pm**

Apr 1: **Lenten Compline (Livestreamed) @ 6pm**

Apr 4: **Panikhida and General Blessing of Graves at St. Mary's Cemetery @ 1pm**

# Glory to God for all things!