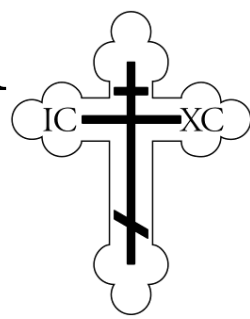
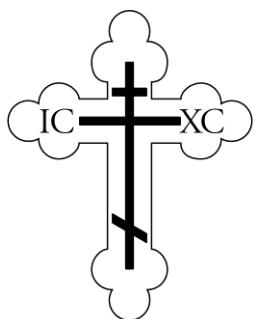


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



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



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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.

December 13, 2020

Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

Rest of St. Herman of Alaska

St. Herman, while he lived on earth, was a simple monk who came from Valaam Monastery in Russia to the shores of Alaska in the year 1794. In the previous year, Metropolitan Gabriel of St. Petersburg asked Abbot Nazarius of Valaam to gather a small group of monks to form a missionary team that would travel across Russia and Siberia to Alaska (at that time a Russian possession) to bring the Gospel of Christ to the native people. This trek over land and water took more than a year (the longest recorded single missionary journey in the history of the church).

Upon reaching the end of their journey they arrived at Kodiak Island aboard the ship Three Hierarchs on September 24, 1794. Immediately, the monks began to fan out across Alaska, while St. Herman remained at the home base in Kodiak at the newly built

Holy Resurrection Church to administer the overall mission and newly established school. The mission was a thriving one, received with great enthusiasm by most of the native people and resulting in thousands of Baptisms. Schools were started, churches built, many sacramental marriages were performed; all through the grace-filled efforts of 10 monks who labored in the midst of harsh and primitive conditions.

Often they did not enjoy the support of the Russian American Company, which was the local Russian authority in the area. Alexander Baranov was in charge of the company and proved to be a tyrannical and self-serving leader who considered the natives to be little more than slave laborers. Father Herman and the other monks labored mightily to protect them and intercede on their behalf with the higher authorities in Russia.

After about 15 years St. Herman moved to Spruce Island, which is a small densely wooded island about 1 mile off the coast of Kodiak, to pursue a more hermit-like life. He brought his whole monastic spiritual formation, rich experience, and Orthodox inheritance to bear upon this new life. He built a church and a cell, planted a garden and in a short time started an orphanage and school for the people on the island.

With burning love and compassion, he began to deposit within the hearts of all who came, something of the wondrous Christian treasure that had been entrusted to him. He labored for the most part alone at this stage of his life, pressing forward with great patience and humility. He chanted the church services, contemplated the Scripture, the writings of the Philokalia, and other writings of the Saints which he had brought to the New World and pursued an intense life of interior prayer.

He was once asked, "How do you live alone in the forest, Fr. Herman, don't you become bored and lonely?" He replied, "No! I am not alone here. God is here, as God is everywhere. Holy angels are here. Can one become bored with them? With whom is converse better and more pleasant, with men or with angels? Of course, with angels!"

He foresaw the time of his earthly departure, and when the time came, he was surrounded by his beloved orphans and spiritual children who were reading the Acts of the Apostles by his bedside. At that moment they recorded that his face suddenly began to shine and the cell was filled with a divine fragrance and they knew that their elder was dead.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 2 – Resurrectional Troparion

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,
You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.
And when from the depths You raised the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

Tone 2 – Troparion for the Holy Forefathers

Through faith You justified the Forefathers,
betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles.
These saints exult in glory,
for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:
she who bore You without seed.//
So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

Tone 7 – Troparion for St. Herman

O joyful North Star of the Church of Christ,
guiding all men to the Heavenly Kingdom,
teacher and apostle of the True Faith,
intercessor and defender of the oppressed,
adornment of the Orthodox Church in America:
Blessed Father Herman of Alaska,
pray to our Lord Jesus Christ//
for the salvation of our souls!

Tone 2 – Resurrectional Kontakion

Hell became afraid, almighty Savior,
seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation with Adam beheld this and rejoiced
with You,//
and the world, my Savior, praises You forever.

Tone 3 – Kontakion for St. Herman

The eternal light of Christ our Savior
guided you, O blessed father Herman,
on your evangelical journey to America
to proclaim the Gospel of peace.
Now you stand before the throne of glory:
intercede for your land and its people,//
asking peace for the world and salvation for our souls.

Tone 6 – Kontakion for the Holy Forefathers

You did not worship the graven image,

O thrice-blessed ones,

but armed with the immaterial Essence of God,

you were glorified in a trial by fire.

From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying:

“Hasten, O compassionate One!

Speedily come to our aid, //

for You are merciful and able to do as You will!”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 4 – Song of the Fathers (Daniel 3)

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers,

and praised and glorified is Your Name forever!

Tone 7 – Prokeimenon for St. Herman (Psalm 115)

Precious in the sight of the Lord / is the death of His saints!

Epistle: Colossians 3.4-11 (Forefathers)

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things, in which you once walked when you lived in them, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. But now you must put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language from your mouth; do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with its deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Galatians 5.22 – 6.2 (St. Herman)

Brethren: the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Gospel: Luke 14.16-24 (Forefathers)

Jesus spoke this parable saying, "A certain man gave a great supper, and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

"But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to examine them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

"So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.'

"And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"

Luke 6.17-23 (St. Herman)

At that time, Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.

Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Barbara Kurth
Mary Ann Behnke
Mitch Bright
Archbishop David

Sue McCune
Ev.Mem. Peter Petroff ('30)
Anastasia Lewontuk ('49)
Anga Julovich ('85)

Health & Salv.
Archpr. Peter
Mat. Margaret
Mat. Anne
Pr. Christopher
Mat. Jennifer
Andrew
Gideon
Kevin
Jon
Tanya
Jovan
Julia
Warren
Tom
Tina
Brittany
Jennifer
Gail
Stacy
Jeramie
Olivia
Parker
Christine
Linda
Larry
Rollie
Joseph
Nadia
Daniel
Brendan
David

Sharon
Michael
Janie
Tanya
Christopher
Nina
Renee
Carissa
Cynthia
John
Vern
Olga
Mark
Jerry
Michael
Janice
Dushawna
Daniel
Anthony
Janet
Daryl
Diane
Carla
Susan
Timothy
William
Paul
Joseph
Linda
Claudia
Tom
Beth

Elizabeth
Snezana
Nathan
Kara
Ryan
Thomas
Carol
Christine
Jon
Zoey
Dominic
Declan
Hudson
TaQuana
Ayden
Hyland
Jason
Ted
James
Pamela
Erin
Alexander
Ronald
Theodore
Robert
Mary Ann
Lara
Craig
Chuck
Scott
Mark
Julie

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next weekday Liturgy will be for the **Saturday before Nativity** this **Saturday, December 19**.

Thank you to those who assisted with the blood drive on Friday.

2021 Calendars are available in the Narthex.

Order forms for a **Christmas Sausage Sale** are available in the Narthex. Proceeds benefit our **building fund**, which is now saving to replace our roof in 2022. Polish and Italian sausage were made by a team of men from our parish.

This Advent season we are participating in a **Christmas toy drive for foster children**. There is a flyer with more information in the Narthex, as well as a drop-box to leave your gifts.

Contrary to the December calendar, there will be **no Bible Study** until after the new year.

Mark your calendars:

Dec 17: **Faith Enrichment @ 10am**

Dec 24: **Vespereal Liturgy of Christmas @ 10am**
Christmas Vigil @ 6pm

Dec 25: **Festal Divine Liturgy @ 9am**

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$5,040

Exposing the Works of Darkness

A reflection by His Eminence, our Archbishop Paul

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. (Eph 5:11-13)

This verse from Ephesians was part of the epistle reading for last Sunday December 6th, the feast day of St. Nicholas. How did St. Nicholas expose the works of darkness in his ministry? As we raise our children how do we help them to cope with evil in this world and bear witness to the world's initial goodness? Read the life of

St. Nicholas as found on the OCA webpage, and I think one can find answers to these questions.

Too often we deal with evil by engaging others in a debate about it, and we argue over who is right and who is wrong. When we deal with matters that way, it usually doesn't get anywhere. It reminds me of the following words from our Lord:

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

The life of St. Nicholas gives wonderful examples of how he exposed darkness by doing good rather than debating matters. Here are a few examples of how St. Nicholas exposed evil through goodness and love,

- He saved a father from selling his three daughters off to become prostitutes by throwing three bags of coins in secret through the window of their home.
- He interceded with the governor in Myra on behalf of three men unjustly condemned to death. The sentences were overturned, and the governor repented of his behavior.
- He saved three military officers from execution who were falsely found guilty. Nicholas appeared in a dream to the emperor Constantine to have him overturn the verdict and free them.
- Through the prayers of Nicholas, he rescued Myra from famine. He appeared to a merchant, leaving him three gold coins to buy and deliver grain to Myra.
- There are more.

At the anaphora prayer of St. Basil, we call upon our Lord to "Preserve the good in goodness, and to make the evil be good by His goodness." Let us encourage one another to follow after the example of St. Nicholas by becoming the Light of Goodness or, more so, the Light of Christ. Let us kill what is evil in us and in this world by the kindness of our love for one another.

Forgive me a sinner. The blessing of the Lord be upon you,

+Paul