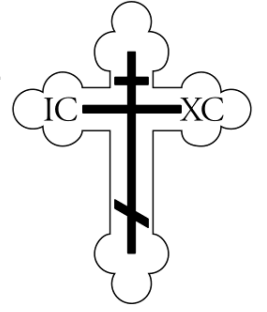
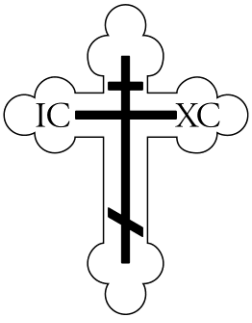


# Protection of the Virgin Mary

## Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago  
and the Midwest  
Orthodox Church  
in America

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Merrillville, IN 46410  
(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**  
**parish hall after Divine**  
**Liturgy for coffee hour.**

## September 11, 2022

### Afterfeast of the

# Nativity of the Theotokos

## St. Theodora of Alexandria

### Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross

Saint Theodora of Alexandria and her husband lived in Alexandria. Love and harmony ruled in their family, and this was hateful to the Enemy of salvation. Goaded on by the devil, a certain rich man was captivated by the youthful beauty of Theodora and began with all his abilities to lead her into adultery, but for a long time he was unsuccessful. Then he bribed a woman of loose morals, who led the unassuming Theodora astray by saying that a secret sin, which the sun does not see, is also unknown to God.

Theodora betrayed her husband, but soon came to her senses, and realizing the seriousness of her fall, she became furious with herself. Her conscience gave her no peace, and Theodora went to a renowned abbess and told her about her transgression. The abbess, seeing the repentance of the young woman, spoke to her of God's forgiveness and reminded her of the sinful woman in the Gospel, who washed the feet of Christ with her tears and received from Him forgiveness of her sins. In hope of the mercy of God, Theodora said: "I believe my God, and from now on, I shall not commit such a sin, and I will strive to atone for my deed."

At that moment St Theodora resolved to go off to a monastery to purify herself by labor and by prayer. She left her home secretly, and dressing herself in men's clothes, she went to a men's monastery, since she feared that her husband would find her in a women's monastery.

Even the experienced monks were amazed at Theodora's all-night prayers on bended knee, her humility, endurance and self-denial. The saint labored at the monastery for eight years. Her body, once defiled by adultery, now became a vessel of the grace of God and a receptacle of the Holy Spirit.

Once, the saint was sent to Alexandria to buy provisions. After blessing her for the journey, the abbot indicated that in case of a delay, she should stay over at the Enata monastery, which was on the way. Also staying at the guest house of the Enata monastery was the daughter of its abbot. She had come to visit with her father. Attracted by the comeliness of the young monk, she tried to seduce the monk Theodore into the sin of fornication, not knowing that it was a woman. Meeting with refusal, she committed sin with another guest and became pregnant. Meanwhile, the saint bought the food and returned to her own monastery.

After a certain while the father of the shameless girl, realizing that a transgression had occurred, began to question his daughter about the father of the child. The girl indicated that it was the monk Theodore. When the girl gave birth, the Enata monks brought the infant to the monastery where the saint lived, and began to reproach its monks for an unchaste life. They entrusted the infant into the care of the saint and threw her out of the monastery in disgrace.

The saint humbly submitted to this new trial, seeing in it the expiation of her former sin. She settled with the child not far from the monastery in a hut. Shepherds, out of pity, gave her milk for the infant, and the saint herself ate only wild vegetables.

Bearing her misfortune, the holy ascetic spent seven years in banishment. Finally, at the request of the monks, the abbot allowed her to return to the monastery with the child, and in seclusion she spent two years instructing the child. The abbot of the monastery received a revelation from God that the sin of the monk Theodore was forgiven. The grace of God dwelt upon the saint, and soon all the monks began to witness to the signs worked through her.

Once, during a drought, all the wells dried up. The abbot told the brethren that only Theodore would be able to reverse the misfortune. Having summoned the saint, the abbot bade her to bring forth water, and the water in the well did not dry up afterwards. The humble saint said that the miracle was worked through the prayer and faith of the abbot.

Before her death, St Theodora shut herself in her cell with the child and instructed him to love God above all things. After this, she prayed and, for the last time, she asked the Lord to forgive her sins. The child also prayed together with her. Soon the words of prayer faded from the lips of the ascetic, and she peacefully departed to a better world.

The Lord revealed to the abbot the spiritual accomplishments of the saint, and also her secret. The abbot, in order to remove any dishonor from the deceased, in the presence of the abbot and brethren of the Enata monastery, told of his vision and uncovered the bosom of the saint as proof.

The Enata abbot and brethren shrank back in terror at their great transgression. Falling down before the body of the saint, with tears they asked forgiveness of St Theodora. News of St Theodora reached her former husband. He received monastic tonsure at this same monastery where his wife had been. And the child, raised by the nun, also followed in the footsteps of his foster-mother. Afterwards, he became abbot of this very monastery.

## 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 – Troparion of the Nativity of the Theotokos**

Your nativity, O Virgin,  
has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!  
The Sun of righteousness, Christ our God,  
has shone from you, O Theotokos.  
By annulling the curse,  
He bestowed a blessing.//  
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

### **Tone 8 – Troparion for St. Theodora**

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Mother,  
for you took up the Cross and follow Christ.  
By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes away;  
but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal.//  
Therefore, your spirit, venerable Theodora, rejoices with the angels.

### **Tone 4 – Resurrectional Kontakion**

My Savior and Redeemer, as God,  
rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains.  
He has shattered the gates of hell,  
and as Master,//  
He has risen on the third day!

### **Tone 2 – Kontakion for St. Theodora**

You depleted your bodily strength by fasting, vigil, and prayers,  
entreating the Creator to grant forgiveness of your sin;  
having received it, you showed us the way of repentance,//  
venerable Mother Theodora.

### **Tone 4 – Kontakion for the Nativity of the Theotokos**

By your nativity, O most pure Virgin,  
Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness,  
Adam and Eve — from the corruption of death.  
And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing  
to you://  
“The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of  
our Life.”

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **Tone 6 – Prokeimenon for the Cross (Psalm 27)**

O Lord, save Your people, / and bless Your inheritance!

### **Tone 3 – Prokeimenon for the Theotokos (Luke 1)**

My soul magnifies the Lord, / and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

## **Epistle: Galatians 6.11-18 (Sunday before the Cross)**

Brethren: See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

## **1 Corinthians 16.13-24 (Sunday)**

Brethren: Watch! Stand fast in the faith! Be brave; be strong. Let all that you do be done with love. I urge you, brethren – you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints – that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men.

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

The salutation with my own hand – Paul's. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Maranatha! (Lord, come!) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## **Gospel: John 3.13-17 (Sunday before the Cross)**

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

## Matthew 21.33-42 (Sunday)

Jesus spoke this parable: “There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

“Again, he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

“But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

## WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

**New Dep.** Met. Kallistos Ware

Doris Corcoran

Myra Schafer

Gity Karamouz

Katheryn Sofranoff

**Ev.Mem.** John Nestrenko ('35)

George Sadvoy ('43)

Naum Nasoff ('57)

James Vahary (2015)

Olive Leskow (2018)

**Health & Salv.**

Met. Herman

Archpr. Peter

Mat. Anne

Dn. Nicholas

Kevin

Jon

Tanya

Jovan

Tom

Jennifer

Larry

Rollie

Joseph

Nadia

Mark

Jerry

Joseph

Linda

Claudia

Carol

Snezana

Ryan

Nathan

Kara

Djuro

Dominic

Declan

Hudson

Ayden

Hyland	Stephanie	Doris
Jason	Mary Ann	Laura
Ted	Robb	Duane
James	Desiree	Elizabeth
Pamela	Hanna	Karen
Alexander	Jaroslava	Alexa
Ronald	Andrew	Miriana
William	Andrew	Olga
Wanda	Vadim	Richard
Ivanka	Hanna	Klaudia
Aaron	Alex	Nicodemus
Karen	Carl	Nada
Sandra	Laura	Mark
Linda	Chrisan	Catherine
Jim	Janice	Aaron
John	Gerald	Ebony
Martha	Olga	Peggy
Mark	Janie	Sue
Michelle	David	Victoria
Irene	Sharon	Janet
Michelle	Tanya	Tom
Erika	Renee	Wilma
Luke	Carissa	Luba
Jo	Ashton	

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

### **Special Petitions at the Augmented Litany:**

We pray, O Lord our God, for all those who suffer from acts of war, especially for the victims in Ukraine. We pray for Your peace and Your mercy in the midst of the great suffering of Your people. Vouchsafe to accept the prayers of the Church, so that by Your goodness, peace may return to all peoples; O Lord, hear us and have mercy.

We also pray You, O Lord our God, to remember and have mercy on our Orthodox brothers and sisters in Russia and Ukraine, who are involved in violent conflict. Remove from their midst all hostility, confusion and hatred. Lead everyone along the path of reconciliation and peace, we pray You, hear us and have mercy.

**Festal Theotokion (*instead of "It is Truly Meet..."*)**

Magnify, O my soul, the most glorious birth of the Mother of God!

Virginity is foreign to mothers;

childbearing is strange for virgins.

But in you, O Theotokos, both were accomplished.

Therefore, all we nations of the earth unceasingly magnify you.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**For Bible Study this week read Job 13-18.**

The **Ladies' Sodality** has organized a **winter coat, hat, and gloves drive** through the month of September. Winter items may be deposited in the collection bin in the narthex from **now through Sunday, October 2**, after which they will be delivered to the Salvation Army.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon has set the date for the enthronement of His Grace Daniel as Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest for Saturday, October 1, 2022, the Feast of the Protection of the Virgin Mary. **All are encouraged to come and participate in the Liturgy and enthronement at Holy Trinity Cathedral beginning at 9am.** For this reason, there will be no Divine Liturgy at our parish for the feast. More details about the celebration of our parish feast day/anniversary weekend are forthcoming.

### **Mark your calendars:**

**Sept 13: Ladies' Sodality meeting @ 10am**

**Great Vespers for the Exaltation of the Cross @ 6pm**

**Sept 14: Divine Liturgy for the Exaltation of the Cross @ 10am**

**Bible Study @ 7pm**

**Sept 15: Women's Book Group @ 6pm**

**Sept 17-18: Fr Jacob out of town; No Vespers Saturday, Fr Howard Sloan will serve Liturgy Sunday.**

**Sept 30: Festal Vespers for our Patronal Feast (Protection) @ 6pm**

**Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$2,219**

# **Glory to God for all things!**