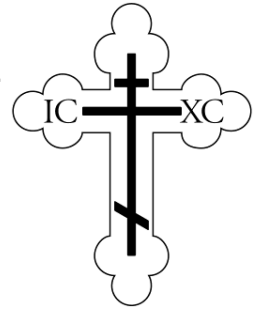
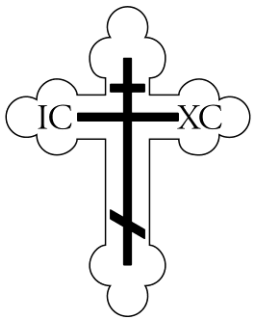


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America

8600 Grand Blvd.
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.

December 25, 2022

The Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

*Today we celebrate the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, found on page
101 of the black Divine Liturgy books*

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (3, 13) it says, "Brethren, observe the feast days; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month." In another place it also says, "Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world."

In the second century, St Clement of Alexandria indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ is December 25. In the third century, St Hippolytus of Rome mentions the Feast of the Nativity of Christ and appoints the Gospel readings for this day from the opening chapters of Saint Matthew.

During the first three centuries, in some of the Eastern Churches, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, and called "Theophany" ("Manifestation of God"). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on the anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from St John Chrysostom's sermon on the Nativity of Christ: "it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized."

HYMNS OF THE DAY

First Antiphon (Psalm 110)

I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart;
I will make all Your wonders known.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!

In the company of the upright, in the congregation,
great are the works of the Lord! (***Refrain***)

They are sought out
according to His will! (***Refrain***)

Full of honor and majesty is His work,
and His righteousness endures forever! (***Refrain***)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. (***Refrain***)

Second Antiphon (Psalm 111)

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who greatly delights in His commandments!

Ref: O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

His descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed! (***Refrain***)

Glory and wealth are in His house,
and His righteousness endures forever! (***Refrain***)

Light rises in the darkness for the upright;
the Lord is merciful, compassionate and righteous! (*Refrain*)

Glory... now and ever... then *“Only-begotten Son...”*

Third Antiphon (Psalm 109)

Cantor: *The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool!”*

Choir: **Tone 4 – Troparion of Nativity**
Your Nativity, O Christ our God,
has shone to the world the light of wisdom!
For by it, those who worshipped the stars
were taught by a star to adore You,
the Sun of righteousness,
and to know You, the Orient from on high.
O Lord, glory to You!

Cantor: *The Lord shall send You the scepter of power from Zion:
“Rule in the midst of Your enemies!” Authority shall be with
You on the day of Your power, in the splendor of Your saints!*

The choir repeats the Troparion as the clergy make the Entrance

Deacon: *From the womb before the morning star have I begotten
You. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind. You
are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek!*

Choir sings the Troparion again, “Glory... Now and ever...” then:

Tone 3 – Kontakion of Nativity

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One!
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!
The wise men journey with a star,
since for our sake the eternal God is born as a little Child!

Instead of “Holy God...”, we sing “As many as have been baptized...”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 8 – Prokeimenon of Nativity (Psalm 65)

Let all the earth worship You and praise You!
Let it praise Your Name, O Most High!

Epistle: Galatians 4.4-7

Brethren: When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Gospel: Matthew 2.1-12

Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

New. Dep. Tony Klassen
Thomas Martin
Donna Chabre
Jimmy Grosdanis
Hanna Kostyuk

Ev.Mem. Simon Vichnecich ('22)
Helen Milevsky ('22)
Paraskeva Pysh ('22)
Frank Kovalenko ('44)
Emil Bain ('45)
Simeon Popka ('57)

Health & Salv.	Ivanka	Ashton
Archpr. Peter	Karen	Doris
Mat. Cynthia	Sandra	Laura
Archpr. John	Linda	Duane
Mat. Anne	Jim	Elizabeth
Dn. Nicholas	John	Karen
Kevin	Martha	Alexa
Jon	Mark	Miriana
Tanya	Michelle	Olga
Jovan	Irene	Richard
Tom	Michelle	Klaudia
Jennifer	Erika	Nicodemus
Rollie	Luke	Nada
Joseph	Jo	Mark
Nadia	Stephanie	Catherine
Joseph	Mary Ann	Aaron
Linda	Robb	Dale
Claudia	Desiree	Ebony
Carol	Jaroslava	Peggy
Snezana	Andrew	Sue
Ryan	Andrew	Victoria
Nathan	Vadim	Janet
Kara	Hanna	Tom
Djuro	Alex	Wilma
Dominic	Carl	Jerry
Declan	Laura	Penelope
Hudson	Chrisan	Cora
Ayden	Gerald	Brandi
Hyland	Olga	Joyce
Jason	Janie	Paul
Ted	David	Galina
James	Sharon	Helen
Pamela	Tanya	Kathleen
Alexander	Renee	N.Ill. John
Ronald	Carissa	

*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.

Megalynarion of Nativity (instead of “It is Truly Meet...”):

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts.

I behold a strange, most glorious mystery:
heaven—the cave;
the cherubic throne—the Virgin;
the manger—the place where Christ lay;
the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in song.

Nativity Communion Hymn:

The Lord has sent redemption to His people!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is **no Bible Study** tomorrow night.

Next Sunday, January 1, after Divine Liturgy we will have our annual **Nativity potluck** celebration. Please bring a dish to share. The Church school will lead us in Christmas carols.

2023 Church Calendars are available in the Narthex.

2022 is almost gone! It is time to start preparing for our **annual meeting on February 12**. All those responsible for preparing **reports**, please have them in to Melody Rozdelsky **by January 15** to be distributed.

Mark your calendars:

Jan 1: **Annual Yolka/Nativity potluck** after Divine Liturgy

Jan 5: **Royal Hours of Theophany @ 10am**

Theophany Vespers with the Great Blessing of Water @ 6pm

Jan 6: **Divine Liturgy for Theophany @ 10am**

Feb 12: **Parish Annual Meeting** after Divine Liturgy

Last week's gifts to the Lord: \$2,336

Archpastoral Message on the Feast of Nativity of His Eminence, our Archbishop Daniel

Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Venerable Monastics, and Beloved Faithful,

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

In the second chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, we read the account of the Wisemen who came from the east, “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him’” (Matthew 2:1-2). These wise men had left the comfort and routine of their daily lives to follow a star that would take them on what might have seemed to be an impulsive adventure, but which would lead them to the newborn King of the Jews and Savior of the World.

The star of Bethlehem was a sign sent from heaven, a part of God's creation which played its unique role in the story of our salvation. This is even acknowledged in our liturgical hymns. As we sing in the Troparion of the Nativity: “Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, Has shone to the world the Light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a Star to adore Thee, The Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on High. O Lord, glory to Thee!”

Throughout the centuries, men and women have studied the stars, their placement in the skies and their movement, seeking in them something greater, something different, looking, at times, for some source of life's meaning. Even today, scientists look to the skies seeking answers to scientific questions and theories and hobbyists and amateur “star gazers” embrace astronomy as a valued pastime and relaxing diversion. If you have ever tried to use a

telescope in a large metropolitan area, you are well aware of what is known as “light pollution,” i.e. artificial light that is produced by streetlights, buildings, cars, etc. Light pollution brightens the sky so much that it also dims the brilliance of the stars and makes it more difficult to see and appreciate their intensity, sometime even to locate them. It is only with a high-powered telescope or by traveling out into the desert or to a high mountain or some remote, unpopulated area that the stars can be clearly seen.

And so it is in our spiritual lives. We look beyond ourselves seeking the Light of Christ that “illuminates all.” However, even in our seeking, we permit our spiritual vision to be dimmed by our own egos, self-will, lusts and passions, pettiness, and any number of “things” that are not beneficial or helpful to us. Only by going “into the desert” or “to the mountaintop” where such tendencies and things can be left behind that we can see the Light that will never dim. Only by ridding our lives of the false and artificial lights that distract us can our vision be clearer and more focused. As we celebrate Christ’s birth, it is my prayer that all of us can leave behind the “artificial light” that distracts us from the true Light of Christ.

In these difficult and seemingly dark days, of wars and rumors of war, as we strive to live lives of peace and harmony with all our brothers and sisters, and as we seek meaning in our daily lives and experiences, let us all keep our sights on the heavens, looking to Christ, whose Light illuminates all. As we recall the Star that led the Wise Men to the Newborn King, let us and acknowledge that our only true goal is life lived in the Light of Christ- in this world and in the life of the world to come.

As celebrate the birth in the flesh of the Son of God, be assured of my prayerful best wishes for you, your families and friends, and all your dear ones. Let us pray for one another, for our God-protected Diocese, for our parishes, for this nation, and for all who seek peace on earth.

With love in Christ our Savior,

+Archbishop Daniel

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!