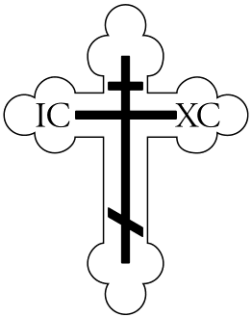


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America



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Merrillville, IN
(219)947-4748
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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

Welcome visitors!
Please join us in the
hall after Divine
Liturgy for coffee hour.

January 19, 2025

St Macarius the Great

Saint Macarius the Great was born in the early fourth century in the village of Ptinapor in Egypt. At the wish of his parents, he entered marriage but was soon widowed. After he buried his wife, Macarius told himself, "Take heed, Macarius, and have care for your soul. It is fitting that you forsake worldly life."

Until his parents died, St Macarius used his remaining substance to help them and he began to pray fervently that the Lord might show him a guide on the way to salvation. The Lord sent him an experienced Elder, who lived in the desert not far from the village. The Elder accepted the youth with love, guided him in the spiritual science of watchfulness, fasting and prayer, and taught him

the handicraft of weaving baskets. After building a separate cell not far from his own, the Elder settled his disciple in it.

The Enemy of our salvation began a tenacious struggle with the ascetic, trying to terrify him, shaking his cell and suggesting sinful thoughts. Evil people slandered him, accusing him of seducing a woman who was found pregnant. They dragged him out of his cell and jeered at him. St Macarius endured this with humility, refusing to defend himself or even deny the accusation. Without a murmur, he sent the money that he got for his baskets for the support of the woman. His innocence was revealed when after many days of torment, the woman was not able to give birth. She confessed that she had slandered the hermit and revealed the name of the real father. At this, the people apologized to the saint and regarded him with great esteem. But though St Macarius had willingly accepted dishonor, he shunned the praise of men, so he fled from that place by night and settled on Mt. Nitria in the Pharan desert.

Having dwelt in the desert for three years, he went to St Anthony the Great, for he had heard that he was still alive in the world, and he longed to see him. Abba Anthony received him with love, and Macarius became his devoted disciple and follower. St Macarius lived with him for a long time and then, on the advice of the saintly abba, he went off to the Skete monastery. He so shone forth in asceticism that he came to be called “a young Elder,” because he had distinguished himself as an experienced and mature monk, even though he was not quite thirty years old. When the saint reached the age of forty, he was ordained to the priesthood and made the head of the monks living in the desert of Skete.

One time the holy abba arrived at his cell to find a thief loading his things on a donkey. Without revealing that he was the owner of these things, the monk began to help tie up the load. He told himself, “We bring nothing at all into this world; clearly, it is not possible to take anything out from it. Blessed be the Lord for all things!”

Once, while praying, St Macarius heard a voice: “Macarius, you have not yet attained such perfection in virtue as two women who live in the city.” The humble ascetic went to the city, found the house where the women lived, and knocked. The women received him, and he said, “I have come from the desert seeking you in order to learn of your good deeds. Tell me about them and conceal nothing.”

The women answered in surprise, “We live with our husbands, and we have not such virtues.” But the saint continued to insist, and the women told him, “We married two brothers. After living toge-

ther in one house for fifteen years, we have not uttered a single malicious nor shameful word, and we never quarrel among ourselves. We asked our husbands to allow us to enter a monastery, but they would not agree. We vowed not to utter a single worldly word until our death.”

St Macarius glorified God and said, “In truth, the Lord seeks neither virgins nor married women, and neither monks nor laymen, but values a person’s free intent, accepting it as the deed itself. He grants to everyone’s free will the grace of the Holy Spirit, which operates in an individual and directs the life of all who yearn to be saved.”

The meekness and humility of the monk transformed human souls. “A harmful word,” said Abba Macarius, “makes good things bad, but a good word makes bad things good.” When the monks asked him how to pray properly, he answered, “Prayer does not require many words. It is needful to say only, “Lord, as Thou wilt and as Thou knowest, have mercy on me.” If an enemy should fall upon you, you need only say, “Lord, have mercy!” The Lord knows that which is useful for us and grants us mercy.”

St Macarius sent a young man who wished to become a monk to a cemetery to rebuke and then to praise the dead. Then he asked him what they said to him. The young man replied, “They were silent to both praise and reproach.” “If you wish to be saved, be as one dead. Do not become angry when insulted, nor puffed up when praised.” And further: “If slander is like praise for you, poverty like riches, insufficiency like abundance, then you shall not perish.”

The monk lived until the age of ninety. Shortly before his death, Sts Anthony and Pachomius appeared to him, bringing the joyful message of his departure to eternal life in nine days. After instructing his disciples to preserve the monastic Rule and the traditions of the Fathers, he blessed them and began to prepare for death. St Macarius departed to the Lord saying, “Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.”

Abba Macarius spent sixty years in the wilderness, being dead to the world. He spent most of his time in conversation with God, often in a state of spiritual rapture. But he never ceased to weep, to repent and to work. The saint’s profound theological writings are based on his own personal experience. Fifty Spiritual Homilies and seven Ascetic Treatises survive as the precious legacy of his spiritual wisdom. Several prayers composed by St Macarius the Great are still used by the Church in the Prayers Before Sleep and also in the Morning Prayers.

The miracles and visions of Blessed Macarius are recorded in a book by the presbyter Rufinus, and his Life was compiled by Saint Serapion, bishop of Tmuntis (Lower Egypt), one of the renowned workers of the Church in the fourth century. His holy relics are in the city of Amalfi, Italy.

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 5 – Resurrectional Troparion

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 – Our 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 1 – Troparion to St Macarius

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,
you were a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father Macarius.
You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil and prayer,
healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to you by faith.
Glory to Him Who gave you strength!
Glory to Him Who granted you a ^crown!//
Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

Tone 5 – Resurrectional Kontakion

You descended into hell, O my Savior,
shattering its gates as Almighty,
resurrecting the dead as Creator,
and destroying the sting of death.
You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man,//
and we cry to You: “O Lord, save us!”

Tone 4 – Kontakion to St Macarius

The Lord truly placed you in the house of abstinence,
as a star enlightening the ends of the earth,//
Venerable Macarius, Father of Fathers.

Tone 4 – Our Patronal Kontakion

Today You have shone forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Your countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing You, we sing Your praises:
“You have come and revealed Yourself,//
O unapproachable Light.”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 5 – Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 11)

You, O Lord, shall protect us
and preserve us from this generation forever!

Epistle: Colossians 3.12-16

Brethren: As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Gospel: Luke 18.35-43

At that time it happened, as Jesus was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So, they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

So, Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. William Harbison

Faryn Valdez

Marie Snodgrass

Ev.Mem. Radica Kuyevich ('21)

Sara Safady ('24)

Michael Klimoff ('28)

Natalia Karta ('68)

Dicho Georgiev ('72)

Afanasy Holok ('84)

Andrew Pilnock ('84)

Thomas Mosak (2023)

Health & Salv.

Archbp Anastasios

Priest Jan

Archpr. Peter

Mat. Cynthia

Hierom. John

Archpr. Jonathan

Mat. Vera

Pr. Patrick

Pr. Gregory

Mat. Beverly

Pr. Nicholas

Mat. Anne

Nun Theodora

Brendan

Rollie

Claudia

Mary Ann

Raymond

Edward

Charlotte

Joseph

Janice

Klaudia

Maja

Raymond

Anne

Desiree

Robb

Gerald

Janet

Gerald

Rebecca

Christopher

Brianna

Logan

Olga

Janie

Sharon

Tanya

Renee

Ashton

Michael

Chris

Nina

Carissa

Carol

Snezana

Ryan

Nathan

Kara

Karen

Alisa

Michael

Moses

Helena

James

Elijah

Lydia

Nina

George

Linda

Kimberly

Steven

Jamie

Kyleigh

Lauren

Kyle

Linda

Denise

Sergei

John

Cindy

Ron

Matthew

John

Erin

Aaron

Marcietta

Galina

Maria

Alla	Rosemary	John
Elizabeth	Nicholas	Terry
Samuel	Natalie	Angie
Joseph	Jovan	Irina
Dwight	Michael	Elizabeth
Renee	Abram	Vitaliy
Dominik	Zoë	Maria
Monica	Brenda	Viktorija
Charles	Sergei	Rebecca
Kimberly	Connie	Pauline
Abigail	Lisa	Kathie
Charles	Mazzy	L.A. Fire Victims

To add the name of a loved one recently departed or on the anniversary of their repose, or someone living and in particular need of prayer, please speak to Fr Jacob

Special Petition at the Augmented Litany:

We pray, O Lord our God, for all those who suffer from acts of war, especially the victims in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, and Palestine. 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, hearken and have mercy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to Fr Nicholas on his ordination to the holy priesthood, and on offering his first Divine Liturgy this morning. Fr Nicholas will help out with some of our monthly classes and is available to hear confessions by appointment.

After venerating the cross, we will serve the **2-year memorial for Tom Mosak**.

For **Bible Study** tomorrow, read **Titus** and **Philemon**.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our **blood drive on Friday**.

2024 contribution statements (for taxes) and 2025 stewardship envelopes are ready for pick-up in the Narthex. It is a great help to our volunteers who count and record your gifts if you use the numbered envelopes assigned to you.

The **Women's Book Club** is reading ***Do not Judge*** by Hieromonk **Gregorios of Mount Athos**. The book is available in our bookstore at a reduced price of \$5. Discussion is Thursday, January 23 at 6pm.

Every year, **Orthodox Christian homes are blessed with the new holy water of Theophany**. A schedule has been prepared with Fr Jacob's availability through January, which was emailed to the parish. Days have been designated for certain areas/towns. This week, he will be in the Crown Point and Cedar Lake areas on Tuesday and Wednesday. House blessings will continue until Great Lent. Look for the February schedule to be released in the coming weeks.

Our fellow parishioner **Anika Richter is a dental hygiene student at IUN**. The IUN Dental Education Clinic offers **low-cost dental care** overseen by licensed professionals, but administered by students like Anika to help them get the hours they need to graduate. Email her at smilesbyanika@gmail.com to make an appointment. More information is also available on the billboard in the narthex.

Mark your calendars:

Jan 20: **Bible Study @ 7pm**

Jan 21: **Parish Council @ 7pm**

Jan 23: **Faith Enrichment @ 10am**
Women's Book Club @ 6pm

Jan 29: **Festal Vespers for the Feast of the Three Hierarchs @ 6pm**

Jan 30: **Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Three Hierarchs @ 10am**

Feb 9: **Annual Parish Meeting after Divine Liturgy and Lunch**

Feb 14: **Young Adult Game Night @ 6pm**

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$2,281

Glory to God for all things!