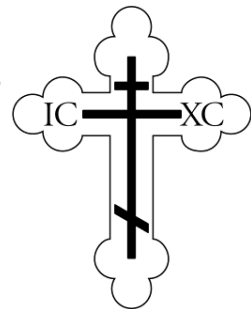
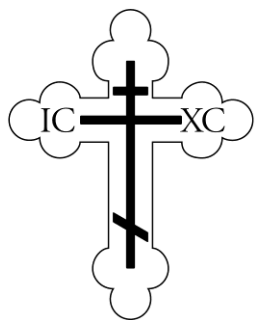


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America



8600 Grand Blvd.
Merrillville, IN
(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
hall after Divine
Liturgy for coffee hour.

March 2, 2025

Forgiveness Sunday

Cheesefare

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 3 – Resurrectional Troparion

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

Tone 4 – 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 6 – Kontakion of Forgiveness Sunday

O Master, Teacher of wisdom,
Bestower of virtue,
Who teach the thoughtless and protect the poor,
strengthen and enlighten my heart!
O Word of the Father,
let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You:
“Have mercy on me, a transgressor,//
O merciful Lord!”

Tone 3 – Patronal Kontakion

Today the Virgin stands in the midst of the Church,
And with choirs of saints she invisibly prays to God for us.
Angels and bishops worship.
Apostles and prophets rejoice together,//
Since for our sake she prays to the eternal God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 8 – Prokeimenon for Forgiveness Sunday (Psalm 75)

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power,
His understanding is beyond measure!

Epistle: Romans 13.11 – 14.4

Brethren: Do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Gospel: Matthew 6.14-21

The Lord said to His disciples: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Joyce Krochta	Ev.Mem. Theophilus Kabov ('13)
Tiana West	John Kuksach ('20)
Valentina Metulynsky	Michael Nichiporchik ('28)
Archbp. Anastasios of Albania	Dane Stoyanoff ('28)
Jon Bertram	Anna Frentzko ('57)
Galina Meuch	Archpr. Spiro Tanaskoski ('95)

Health & Salv.	Mat. Beverly	Edward
Archpr. Peter	Mat. Anne	Charlotte
Mat. Cynthia	Nun Theodora	Joseph
Hierom. John	Brendan	Janice
Archpr. Jonathan	Rollie	Klaudia
Mat. Vera	Claudia	Maja
Pr. Patrick	Mary Ann	Raymond
Pr. Gregory	Raymond	Anne

Desiree	Lydia	Abigail
Robb	Nina	Charles
Gerald	George	Rosemary
Janet	Linda	Nicholas
Gerald	Kimberly	Natalie
Rebecca	Steven	Jovan
Christopher	Jamie	Michael
Brianna	Kyleigh	Abram
Logan	Lauren	Zoë
Olga	Kyle	Brenda
Janie	Linda	Lisa
Sharon	Denise	Mazzy
Tanya	John	John
Renee	Cindy	Terry
Ashton	Ron	Angie
Michael	Matthew	Irina
Chris	John	Elizabeth
Nina	Erin	Vitaliy
Carissa	Aaron	Maria
Carol	Marcietta	Viktoria
Snezana	Maria	Rebecca
Ryan	Alla	Pauline
Nathan	Elizabeth	Meagan
Kara	Samuel	Minnie
Karen	Joseph	Richard
Alisa	Dwight	Rosie
Michael	Renee	Sarah
Moses	Dominik	Milton
Helena	Monica	Andrew
James	Charles	Carol
Elijah	Kimberly	

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 Petitions 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

After venerating the cross we will serve the **40-day memorial for Gail Meuch** and the **30-year memorial for Fr. Spiro Tanaskoski**.

We will serve **Vespers with the Rite of Forgiveness** after a special Cheesefare coffee hour today. This is the right way to begin the fast: asking forgiveness for your mistakes and granting it to others.

Our members **Ed Federinko and Ray Baker lost their home to fire last Tuesday**. Please keep them in prayer. We are organizing a meal train to help support them through this trial. Sign-ups will be emailed to the parish once the details are finalized.

During Great Lent, Orthodox Christians **make more time for prayer, fast from rich and satisfying foods** (meat, dairy, fish), and find opportunities to **help those in need** (almsgiving). They also examine their consciences and repent of their sins before the Lord in the **Sacrament of Confession**. Confession is available before or after evening services. You can also make an appointment with Fr Jacob, including before Sunday Liturgies, if necessary.

To begin Great Lent, the O-Club has organized a new charitable drive to support the **Women's Care Center (a Crisis Pregnancy Center) in Hammond**. It is designed to work like an angel tree: Take a note from the wall in the narthex, which will list a needed baby-care item, purchase the item, and deposit it in the pack & play. **Please return the items by next Sunday, March 9.**

The **Chicago Deanery Lenten Vespers** return at 6pm on Sundays:
March 16 at Christ the Savior in Chicago, IL
March 23 at PTVM... that's us!
March 30 at St Makarios in Hyde Park, IL
April 6 at Holy Theophany in Lake Geneva, WI

Mark your calendars:

Mar 3: **Clean Monday: Beginning of Great Lent**
Great Canon of St Andrew, part 1 @ 7pm

Mar 4: **Great Canon of St Andrew, part 2 @ 7pm**

Mar 5: **Presanctified Liturgy @ 10am**
40-day Panikhida for Archbp Anastasios of Albania @ 6:30p
Great Canon of St Andrew, part 3 @ 7pm

Mar 6: **Great Canon of St Andrew, part 4 @ 7pm**

Mar 7: **Presanctified Liturgy @ 10am**

Mar 9: **Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers** at Sts Peter and Paul
Macedonian Orthodox Church in Crown Point @ 6pm,
followed by a meal.

Mar 15: **Pysanki making: Decorating Pascha Eggs @ 2pm**
Catechism @ 4:30pm
Choir rehearsal @ 5pm

Mar 23: **PTVM hosts the Chicago Deanery Lenten Vespers @ 6pm**
followed by a meal.

Mar 28: **Blood Drive 12 – 6pm**

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$4,989

Beginning of Great Lent 2025

**a pastoral message from
His Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon**

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in
America, beloved children in the Lord,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

We read in the life of St. Euthymius the Great that, in the time of
the great Palestinian monastic fathers, many of the monks had a
practice of retreating into the desert, not just for the forty days of
Lent, but for the entire period between Theophany and Palm
Sunday. This practice is referenced in the hymns of the Triodion. At
Matins on Friday of the Sixth Week—the last of day of Lent—the
final troparion of the second canon proclaims: “All who dwell in
deserts, in mountains and in caves, draw near and assemble with us,
to meet the King and Master with palms in your hands; for he comes
to save our souls.”

Such a practice is unthinkable in our time, even for most
monastics. Still, this practice holds an important lesson for all
Orthodox Christians as we prepare for Great Lent. Namely, that
ascetic effort should not be divorced from silence, *hesychia*, a
withdrawal from the tumult of the world.

In fact, the cultivation of silence has a special value in this age of constant noise. Social media platforms capitalize, quite literally, upon our endless “engagement” with one another. Advertising is ubiquitous, invading every nook of our life, sometimes in truly insidious forms. Thanks to smart phones, a barrage of “entertainment”—podcasts, TikTok videos, YouTube Shorts, Spotify playlists, mobile games—is constantly at our fingertips. News outlets try to persuade us to read or watch or listen to the world’s happenings on a 24-hours-a-day basis. Streaming services like Netflix and live-streaming services like Twitch provide us with a nearly endless river of “content.” And the prevailing ideology tells us that self-expressions and making ourselves “heard” are among life’s highest values.

However, if we constantly fill our eyes and minds with soul-numbing entertainment, what room do we leave for the encounter with God? If we constantly fill our ears with the sound of our own voice and opinions and expression, how shall we hear the eternal Word of the Father?

Therefore, I call upon each of us, all the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, to make a Lenten commitment to cultivate silence in our life in some concrete way. I offer here but a few examples, asking each of us to consider adapting the practice of silence to the realities of our own daily life. We might:

- fast from posting on social media, or perhaps fast from using social media entirely, even passively;
- limit our time on the computer by turning it off at dinnertime and not turning it on again till after breakfast the next day;
- make rules around cellphone usage—no entertainment apps, no podcasts or videos.
- give up all streaming services for the entirety of Lent, or even give up movies, television, and videos altogether for the holy Forty Days.

Regardless of our other efforts, all of us would benefit from resolving to spend 10 minutes or half an hour in complete silence each day, both for the period of the Fast and beyond. In this regard, I recall the 8th and 9th maxims of Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko: “Practice silence, inner and outer. Sit in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day.” It would behoove all of us to practice such deliberate silence in addition to the time we spend in prayer each day.

This practice of silence will take effort, and we may find that we fall short of our goals. But, as with every ascetic effort, we recognize that we are passionate sinners, weak and erring, and in need of God's strengthening grace. Despite our failures, we know that Christ receives and rewards authentic struggle. As St. John of the Ladder says, to fall is human, but to remain fallen is proper only to the demons. If we come up short, we repent and try again, and if we keep trying, by God's grace, we will notice a change in ourselves.

To wit, when we cultivate silence, we weaken our passionate ties to the world. We challenge our tendency to idolize our own words and actions. We become more vigilant, noticing the movements in our mind and soul, helping us to see our own sinfulness and our need for Christ. Perhaps most importantly, when we are still and silent, we allow God to act and to speak.

"Be still, and know I am God," says the holy Scripture (Ps. 45:10); the Word of God came to the holy prophet Elijah in the silence after the storm, as a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12). When Christ quieted the winds and waves, saying "Silence, be still," then the disciples recognized his power (Mk. 4:39). If we, too, wish to encounter his power and his Person, we must practice stillness, allowing him to calm the waves of passion and worldliness that trouble our heart and soul.

The Russian term for a monastic novice is *poslushnik*: the one who obeys, or, more fundamentally, the one who listens. Though we may not be able to retreat into the desert like the great monastic fathers of old, at least we can imitate the novice's way of life by cultivating a small measure of silence and attention in our lives. In addition to our usual and necessary Lenten efforts in fasting, prayer, almsgiving, this Lent, let us all become novices in spirit, through silence learning to listen to God and to obey his word, in which lies our salvation and his great mercy.

Wishing all of you a soul-saving Forty Days, with my primatial blessing and prayers, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Glory to God for all things!