



Orthodox Church in America  
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Thursday, 26 June 2025  
*Appearance of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God*  
№. 95

**ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE**  
**OF HIS EMINENCE, THE MOST REVEREND DANIEL**  
**ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST**

**ON THE FEAST OF THE CHICAGO-TIKHVIN ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**

**To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Beloved Faithful  
of the God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest:**

Dear ones in Christ,

Today, our beloved Diocese of the Midwest joins in prayer as we honor our diocesan patroness and protectress, the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, on the feast of the appearance of her holy icon of *Tikhvin*. As you know, the Church in the Midwest has an historical relationship with this sacred icon, as it sojourned here for over fifty years until it was returned to its home in the Monastery of the Dormition, in Tikhvin, Northern Russia, in 2004. In celebrating this significant diocesan feast, we recall the words of Saint Elizabeth as she greeted Mary: “But why is it granted to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:43). Indeed, how blessed are we that the Mother of our Lord has come to us and remains with us as our protectress and intercessor!

In Saint Matthew’s infancy narrative, we first notice a revealing fact about the Mother of God that recurs throughout the Gospels: where Mary is, the Lord Jesus is also present. She is always seen in relationship to her Divine Son. Saint Matthew writes:

“When they had heard Herod, 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” (Matthew 2:9-11).

Mary is also vitally present at the beginning of the Lord’s public ministry as he performed His first public miracle at the wedding in Cana. It was she who informed her Son that the wine had run out and then instructed the stewards, “Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:5).

Mary is then seen accompanying her Son throughout His ministry of teaching, preaching and healing. Indeed, she is the foremost among His disciples. As Jesus travels from one town and village to another, preaching the good news of salvation, we are told: “... His mother and brothers

came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And some came to Him and said, ‘Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You’” (Luke 8:19-20).

Not every work or word of the Lord is included in the Gospels. The last verse of the Gospel of John tells us as much: “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25). Acknowledging this, we can be confident that Mary, Mother of the Word Made Flesh, was present throughout the Lord’s ministry. And of course, she was with Him supremely as He hung upon the cross, offering His life for the salvation of the world:

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home” (John 19:25-27).

Indeed, from that moment, Mary became the Mother of all of the disciples of her Son. She became our Mother, and she remains in our lives as she did—and does—in the life of her Son.

Once again, these three brief examples impress on us this important truth: where you find Mary, you also find her Son. This is true not only in the Gospels, but also in the iconography of the Orthodox Church. While some icons do portray the Holy Theotokos on her own—though never as a *solitary* figure—the vast majority of her icons portray her with her Son, most often as an infant sitting in her lap or being held in her arms. This is especially true in the *Chicago-Tikhvin Icon*, which we honor as our diocesan patronal icon and which we celebrate with today’s feast.

Mindful that the Mother of God always leads us to her Son, we pray on this day for all of the clergy, clergy wives, monastics, seminarians, and faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest. We pray for our children, asking her protection over them. We pray for those who are ill, for those who care for them, and for those who grieve. We pray that our Sovereign Queen will bless us all and always guide us on the path of her Son, teaching us by her example so that we, like her, follow Christ, the Son of God.

A blessed and joyous feast to you all! Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.

**DANIEL**

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest