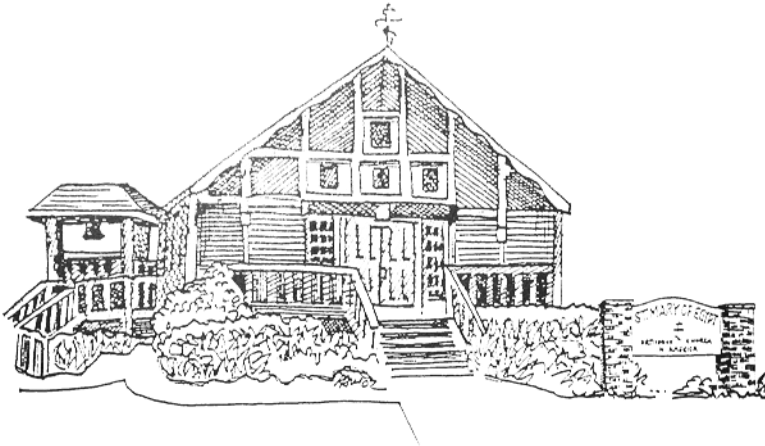


SAINT MARY OF EGYPT ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Newsletter – JULY 2012

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Calendar Highlights

June 30 – July 1 Visit of Abbot Gerasim

July 1 – 6:00 p.m. Patronal Feast Day Vespers at St. John the Wonderworker

July 2 – 8:00 a.m. Patronal Feast Day Liturgy at St. John the Wonderworker

Glorious apostle to an age of coldness and unbelief,/ invested with the grace-filled power of the saints of old,/ divinely illumined seer of heavenly mysteries,/ feeder of orphans, hope of the hopeless,/ thou didst enkindle on earth the fire of love for Christ/ upon the dark eve of the day of judgement.// Pray now that this sacred flame/ may also rise from our hearts.

Tropar - St. John Maximovitch
Commemorated July 2

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION ARE NEEDED FOR:

The Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of the South and for the upcoming Diocesan Assembly
Metropolitan Jonah; Bishop Nikon, Our Holy Synod,
Archpriest Peter, Matushka Anastasia, Lottie
Hieromonk Cyprian, Macrina and Nina
Priest Thomas; Matushka Angela
Archpriest Dimitri; Matushka Maryanne
Deacon Lazarus
Archbishop Seraphim,
Metropolitan Theodosius; Metropolitan Herman,
Our catechumens: Yolanda, Jacob, Stephanie, David and Kim
The infant Juliana & family David, Elizabeth and David Brian, Janese and the newborn infant Catherine (and her brother and sisters)
Gabriel, Susan and the child to be born of her Ward (Patrick) and Cindy (Patricia)
Matt, Lindsay, Preston
Sasha, Natalie, Kristina and Peter
Marcella
Cathie Payton (Maryanne Romano's mother – in treatment for breast cancer)
Richard Romano (Chris' father) in remission of several different types of cancer, and a recent PET scan showed additional "spots of concern." He has also recently been diagnosed with sever artery blockage that because of past radiation is inoperable.
Elise (Chris' mother and Richard's wife and caregiver)
Robert and Xenia Peterson
Abby and Holly (Debra's daughter in laws)
Magdalene Marston
Elaine Calugar and family, Carole;
Anna, Victor; Tanya and family - especially Veronica;
Todd (having uncontrollable stomach issues), Kimber, Mathew, Maggie, Amanda (and the child to be born of her) and her fiancé Paul, and Scott (Todd's brother - home for 2 weeks on leave from Iraq
Niko Bouboulis battling a brain tumor; his father, Pano Christopher Michael
Juliana (Carol) and Peter
Reader John and Alexandra (Brad & Alexis – Carol and Peter's family) as they move to St. Vladimir's
Caleb Noble
Thomas, Emilia, Maria, Catherine; Craig
Anna (Lynne)
Harvey(George) and Irene Ghiz (Emily's parents)
Christopher Tsalos (Emily's uncle)
Rayna and family
Nathaniel, Maria and family (Nathaniel is a long time friend of the Alessandronis who has recently been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor)
Bob Winters (Vincent Hunter's cousin's husband succumbing to lung cancer)
Danielle and Michael (Ralph Geeza's niece and brother)
Kerin Tamara and Todd Demetrios

Archpriest Peter Gilquist in final stages of battle with melanoma and family
William, Veronica (as she awaits a liver donor) and the Arrants family
Teresa and Tim, Cheryl, Linda and Ashley
Barbie and Rob; Patti
Angela, Ed and Nicholas
Andrea Rajski (Michaela's friend)
St. Basil's House
The Gainesville Mission
All those who have suffered and/or are suffering at the hands of others or without friends or family
Those who have fallen asleep in the Lord:
Archbishop Dmitri

St. Jacob Netsvetov Commemorated on July 26

Father Jacob (Netsvetov) of Alaska was born of pious parents in 1802 on Atka Island, Alaska. His father, Yegor Vasil'evich Netsvetov was a Russian from Tobolsk. His mother, Maria Alekseevna, was an Aleut from Atka island. Yegor and Maria had four children who survived infancy; Jacob was the first born. When the family moved to Irkutsk in 1823, Jacob enrolled in the Irkutsk Theological Seminary and placed all his hope in Christ by seeking first the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).

Jacob married a Russian woman (perhaps also a Creole) named Anna Simeonovna. On October 31, 1826, he was ordained to the Holy Diaconate and assigned to serve the altar of the Holy Trinity-St Peter Church in Irkutsk. Two years later, on March 4, 1828, Archbishop Michael, who had earlier ordained Father John Veniaminov (St Innocent), elevated the godly deacon Jacob to the Holy Priesthood.

Archbishop Michael provided Father Jacob with two antimensia: one for the new Church which would be dedicated to the glory of God in honor of St Nicholas the Wonderworker in Atka, and one to be used for missionary activity. On May 1, 1828 a molieben for travelers was served, and Father Jacob, his father, Yegor, (now tonsured as reader for the Atka Church), and his matushka, Anna, set out for Alaska.

Travel in those days was never easy. Nevertheless, aided by prayer and confidence in God's providence, the Netsvetov family arrived safely in Atka over a year later, on June 15, 1829. The new assignment for the newly-ordained Father Jacob would also prove to be quite a challenge. The Atka "parish" comprised a territory stretching for nearly 2,000 miles and included Amchitka, Attu, Copper, Bering and Kurile Islands. But this did not deter the godly young priest. His deep love for God and for his flock was evident in everything that he did. Both in Atka and in the distant villages and settlements which he

visited, Father Jacob offered himself as a "living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1). Having "no worry about his life" (Mt. 6:25 ff), the holy one endured manifold tortures of cold, wet, wind, illness, hunger and exhaustion, for to him life was Christ (Phil 1:21). Showing himself as a "rule of faith," his example brought his people to a deep commitment to their own salvation. Being fully bilingual and bicultural, Father Jacob was uniquely blessed by God to care for the souls of his fellow Alaskans.

When he arrived in Atka, the Church of St Nicholas had not yet been built. So, with his own hands Father Jacob constructed a large tent (Acts 18:3) in which he conducted the services. Later he would transport this tent with him on his missionary journeys. When his first six months had ended (end of 1829), Father Jacob recorded that he had baptized 16, chrismated 442, married 53 couples, and buried 8.



Once the church was constructed, Father Jacob turned his attention to the building of a school in which the children would learn to read and write both Russian and Unangan Aleut. The Russian American Company provided some of the support initially, with the students providing the remainder. This continued until 1841, when it was reorganized as a parish school and ties with the company ceased. Father Jacob proved to be a talented educator and translator whose students became distinguished Aleut leaders in the next generation.

Father Netsvetov led an active physical and intellectual life, hunting and gathering for his own subsistence needs, preparing specimens of fish and marine animals for the natural history museums of Moscow and St Petersburg, corresponding with St Innocent (Veniaminov) on matters of linguistics and translations. He labored over the creation of an adequate alphabet for the Unangan-Aleut language, and the translation of the Holy Scriptures and other appropriate literature into that language. St Innocent praised the young pastor for his holiness of life, his teaching, and for continuing this work of translating which he, himself, had begun earlier among the native

peoples. After fifteen years of service, Father Jacob was awarded the Nabadrennik, Kamilavka, and Gold Cross. Later, he would be made Archpriest and receive the Order of St Anna.

In March of 1836, his precious wife, Anna, died of cancer; his home burned to the ground in July of 1836; and his dear father, Yegor, died of an undetermined illness in 1837. He patiently endured hardships and sufferings like the Holy Apostle Paul. He saw in these misfortunes a call from God to even greater spiritual struggles. With this in mind, Father Jacob petitioned his ruling bishop to return to Irkutsk in order to enter the monastic life. A year later, word reached him that permission was granted contingent upon the arrival of a replacement. None ever came.

Father Jacob continued to serve his far-flung flock of the Atka parish until December 30, 1844. A new zeal had taken hold of him, and it was then that St Innocent appointed him to head the new Kvikhpak Mission in order to bring the light of Christ to the people of the Yukon. Here, aided by two young Creole assistants, Innokentii Shayashnikov and Konstantin Lukin, together with his young nephew, Vasilii Netsvetov, Father Jacob "settled" in the wilderness of Alaska.

He learned new languages, embraced new peoples and cultures, devised another alphabet, built another church and Orthodox community, and for the next twenty years, until his health and eyesight failed, continued to be an evangelical beacon of the grace of God in southwestern Alaska.

Establishing his headquarters in the Yup'ik Eskimo village of Ikogmiute (today's 'Russian Mission') he traveled to native settlements hundreds of miles up and down Alaska's longest river (the Yukon) as well as the Kuskokwim River region. At the insistence of Indian leaders, he traveled as far as the middle of the Innoko River baptizing hundreds of Indians from various, and often formerly hostile, tribes. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps 133:1). He built the first Christian temple in this region, and dedicated it to the feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross. Here Father Jacob, in spite of failing health, joyfully celebrated the Church's cycle of services, including all of the services prescribed for Holy Week and Pascha.

Finally, in 1863, the evil one inspired an assistant of Father Jacob to level spurious and slanderous charges against his master. This resulted in a summons to Sitka, issued by Bishop Peter. The godly pastor was quickly cleared of all charges, but due to his ever-worsening health, he remained in Sitka for his final year serving a Tlingit chapel. He died on July 26, 1864 at the age of 60 and was buried on the third day at the entry of the chapel. During his final missionary travels in the Kuskokwim/Yukon delta region, he had baptized 1,320 people - distinguishing himself as

the evangelizer of the Yup'ik Eskimo and Athabascan Indian peoples.

This brief history has recounted the basic chronology of the saint's life and labors, but we must not neglect to relate his other deeds. Once in November of 1845, Father Jacob was preaching in the village of Kalskag, where the local chief was also the head shaman. He spoke for all of the villagers and resisted the Word of God forcefully. But the saint, calm and full of the Holy Spirit, continued to sow the seeds of right belief and piety. After many hours, the chief fell silent and finally came to believe. The villagers, in solidarity with their leader, also joyously expressed their belief in the Triune God and sought Holy Baptism.

Father Jacob was a physician of bodies as well as souls. He often cared for the sick among his flock even to his own detriment. During the winter of 1850-1851 the saint was himself ravaged with illness. Yet he cared for the sick and dispensed medicine to them every day. Father Jacob's preaching often brought together in the Holy Faith tribes who were traditional enemies. One example from his journal reads:

"Beginning in the morning, upon my invitation, all the Kol'chane and Ingalit from the Yukon and the local ones gathered at my place and I preached the word of God, concluding at noon. Everyone listened to the preaching with attention and without discussion or dissent, and in the end they all expressed faith and their wish to accept Holy Baptism, both the Kol'chane and the Ingalit (formerly traditional enemies). I made a count by families and in groups, and then in the afternoon began the baptismal service. First I baptized 50 Kol'chane and Ingalit men, the latter from the Yukon and Innoko. It was already evening when I completed the service. March 21, 1853."

So it was that this apostolic man, this new Job, conducted himself during his earthly course. There are many other deeds and wonders which he performed, many known and many more known only to God. Few missionaries in history have had to endure the hardships which Father Jacob faced, yet he did so with patience and humility. His life of faith and piety are the legacy which he leaves to us, his spiritual children in America, and indeed to all Christians throughout the world.

Holy St. Jacob pray for us



He is a man; do not rejoice in his fall. He is your brother; let not your heart leap for joy when he stumbles. God created him for life, and God does

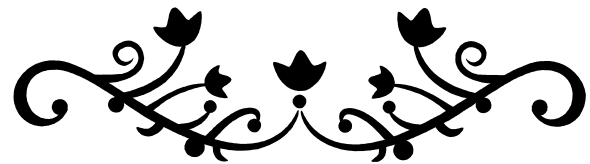
not rejoice in his fall. And you also, do not rejoice at that which grieves God. When a man falls, God loses; do you rejoice in the loss of your Creator, of your Parent? When the angels weep, do you rejoice?

When your enemy falls, pray to God for him that God will save him; and give thanks to God that you did not fall in the same manner. You are of the same material, both you and he; like two vessels from the hand of the potter. If one vessel breaks, should the other one smile and rejoice? Behold, the small stone that broke that vessel only waits for someone's hand to raise it to destroy this vessel also. Both vessels are of the same material, and a small stone can destroy a hundred vessels.

When one sheep is lost, should the rest of the flock rejoice? No, they should not. For behold, the shepherd leaves his flock and, being concerned, goes to seek the lost sheep. The shepherd's loss is the flock's loss, too. Therefore, do not rejoice when your enemy falls, for your Shepherd and his Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, do not rejoice in his fall.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Good Shepherd, remove malicious joy from our hearts, and in its place plant compassion and brotherly love.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



Is Anybody There? Speaking to the Heart

- Fr. Stephen Freeman

"Talking to you is like talking to a fence post!"

I can still hear the words. I don't remember who said them – but I heard them sometime in my teenage years. The occasion was doubtless some sort of argument. There were many things to argue about: Love, Peace, War, Jesus, Drugs, Sex, Rock 'n Roll.

There was a great deal of talk and almost no conversation. But why was the experience of talking to someone similar to speaking to a block of wood? The simple answer is, "No one is at home."

When the ego (the false self generated by our anxieties, fears, grandiosity, etc.) becomes our public voice, the true self is rendered mute. Conversations with the ego are almost useless. Conversations with the ego also tend to provoke responses from the ego – "like calls to like." Thus one set of defenses speaks to another set of aggressions, switching places as the war of words waxes and wanes. No information is exchanged. No minds are changed. The heart remains inert, shielded in a fog of make-believe.

We are often struck by the relatively short statements of Christ. "Follow me," and a man leaves his fishing nets and becomes a disciple. I have often wondered if the gospels simply give us a brief summary of a longer conversation. As years have worn on, I think not.



Jacob's Well within the walls of an Orthodox Monastery

One of the longest conversations recorded in the gospels takes place between Christ and the woman at the well (John 4). Every word of Christ is addressed to the heart. The woman initially responds from the ego.

Jesus says, "Give Me a drink." She responds (defensively), "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?"

Jesus speaks again to her heart, if you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." Christ continues and

speaks about living water. Her first response from the heart says, "Sir, give me this water..."

Christ goes deeper into her heart, "Go, call your husband, and come here." Her response, "I have no husband," is a confession, spoken from the depths of her heart. There is no explanation no prevarication. In the final moments of the conversation the ego offers a last defense – one last argument of Samaritans versus Jews. Christ responds with the word of the coming Messiah, and reveals Himself to her. In the coming of the Christ, all space between Jew and Samaritan is bridged. The one common hope of the heart destroys the imagined pain of the false self.

The words of Christ, spoken consistently to the heart, reveal a woman whose life is a story of broken relationships (five husbands and a live-in friend) to be a saint. The woman at the well, known to the Church as St. Photini, later dies a martyr's death, having drunk to the full the living water given her that day.

Our own conversations, both when speaking and listening, do well to be grounded in the heart. Here are some tools to use to remain in the heart: Use fewer words – be silent if possible. (Eccles. 3:3) Only speak the truth, though it is not necessary to be unkind. (Eph. 4:15)

Resist the effort to defend yourself. (Matt. 10:19)

It is not important to be right. (Proverbs 26:21)

Do not argue. Your effect on someone else's ego will come to nothing. (Hos. 4:4)

Tell your anxieties that everything will be ok. (Phil. 4:6)

Don't be in a hurry to speak. Let someone else finish their thought. (Proverbs 29:20).

Breathe.

Those who know me will understand the irony of my advice. Of those who sin against speech, I am first.



NEWS ITEMS:



Special Coffee Hour on July 15. Cinda Chernecky is hosting a special coffee hour in honor of Olga's 85th birthday

Shoes for School: We will continue



collecting funds for gift cards for Back to School Shoes for needy children in the area. We are one of the only ones who do this in Gwinnett County and it is much appreciated and much needed. **The school bus will be available through Sunday July 29.**

Play Ground: Timothy Gill is raising funds for the new playground as part of his Eagle project. We have raised **\$650 of the \$2,500 goal.**



Playground Fundraiser:

We have teamed up with Mr. Clean Carwashes for a playground fundraiser. We have tickets for sale for all Atlanta area **Mr. Clean Carwashes for \$14.** \$7 of each ticket goes directly to the playground fund. Tickets can be sold to parish members, friends, neighbors and extended family. Please help us raise the funds we need for the playground and get your car washed while you are at it. Please see Michaela Staskewicz or Timothy Gill for tickets.

Coffee Hour Teams: It is time to sign up for the 2nd half of 2012 coffee hours.



To share the effort fairly, please sign up for 2 Sundays between now and the end of the year.

New Sign - the new sign is almost complete.

It is a great size, design and location to let folks know that we are here. Thank you Taylor for all your very hard work.

Sunday School Teachers: We are looking for a couple of Sunday School teachers for this coming school year. Please see Anya Gill if you are interested.

St. Nicholas Days: Our 2nd annual St. Nicholas Day will be held on December 1-2. We're looking for arts and crafts, gift items, homemade jams and jellies and other special treats. We're planning on special children's activities and tours of the church temple. Please plan on being part of these special days

Parish Council Corner Treasurer's Report:

Income (Jan-Jun 17): \$67,246.32

Expenses (Jan-Jun 17): \$59,074.32

Actual Net Income: \$8172

Budgeted Net Income: \$3973.82

Thank you for your faithful support of our parish

July Calendar

Week of July 1	
Sun July 1	9:00 Choir Practice 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy Parish visit by Abbot Gerasim
Mon July 2	Divine Liturgy at 8:00 a.m. at St. John the Wonderworker
Tues July 3	10:00 a Akathist
Weds July 4	7:00 p Daily Vespers
Thurs July 5	7:40 a Hours 8:00 a Divine Liturgy
Fri July 6	10:00 Various
Sat July 7	4:00 Confessions 5:00 Vigil
Week of July 8	
Sun July 8	9:00 Choir Practice 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy
Mon July 9	10:00 a Akathist
Tues July 10	10:00 a Akathist
Weds July 11	7:00 p Daily Vespers
Thurs July 12	7:40 a Hours 8:00 a Divine Liturgy
Fri July 13	10:00 Various
Sat July 14	4:00 Confessions 5:00 Vigil
Week of July 15	
Sun July 15	9:00 Choir Practice 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy Special coffee hour for Olga McGuinness Parish Council Meeting
Mon July 16	10:00 a Akathist
Tues July 17	10:00 a Akathist
Weds July 18	7:00p Daily Vespers
Thurs July 19	7:40 a Hours 8:00 a Divine Liturgy
Fri July 20	10:00 Various
Sat July 21	4:00 Confessions 5:00 Vigil
Week of July 22	
Sun July 22	9:00 Choir Practice 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy
Mon July 23	10:00 a Akathist
Tues July 24	10:00 a Akathist

Weds July 25	7:00 p Daily Vespers
Thurs July 26	7:40 a Hours 8:00 a Divine Liturgy 7:00p Vespers
Fri July 27	10:00 Divine Liturgy – Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul
Sat July 28	4:00 Confessions 5:00 Vigil Parish Visit by Fr. Gerasim
Week of July 29	
Sun July 29	9:00 Choir Practice 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy Parish Visit by Fr. Gerasim
Mon July 30	10:00a Akathist
Tues July 31	10:00a Akathist
Weds Aug 1	Beginning of Dormition Lent Procession of the Wood of the Cross 7:00 p Daily Vespers
Thurs Aug 2	7:40 a Hours 8:00 a Divine Liturgy
Fri Aug 3	10:00a Various
Sat Aug 4	4:00 Confessions 5:00 Vigil

O Lord, grant that I may meet all that this coming day brings to me with spiritual tranquility. Grant that I may fully surrender myself to Thy holy Will.

At every hour of this day, direct and support me in all things. Whatever news may reach me in the course of the day, teach me to accept it with a calm soul and the firm conviction that all is subject to Thy holy Will.

Direct my thoughts and feelings in all my words and actions. In all unexpected occurrences, do not let me forget that all is sent down from Thee.

Grant that I may deal straightforwardly and wisely with every member of my family, neither embarrassing nor saddening anyone.

O Lord, grant me the strength to endure the fatigue of the coming day and all the events that take place during it. Direct my will and teach me to pray, to believe, to hope, to be patient, to forgive, and to love. Amen.

- Morning Prayer of the Optina Elders