



## St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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### Rest of St. Jacob Netsvetov, Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska July 26, 2020

#### **Troparion – Tone 6**

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, // glory to Thee.

#### **Troparion – Tone 4**

O righteous Father Jacob, adornment of Atka and the Yukon Delta; thou didst offer thyself as a living sacrifice to bring light to a searching people. Offspring of Russian America, flower of brotherly unity, healer of sickness and terror of demons: O Holy Father Jacob, // pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved!

#### **Kontakion – Tone 6**

When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. // He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

#### **Kontakion – Tone 3**

O Holy Father Jacob, teacher of the knowledge of God, thou didst reveal thy love for thy people, taking up thy cross and following Christ, enduring hardships like the Apostle Paul. Pray on our behalf to Christ our God // to grant us great mercy!

#### **Prokeimenon – Tone 6**

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance!

*v: To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!*

#### **Prokeimenon – Tone 7**

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, / and shall hope in Him.

#### **Rest of St. Jacob Netsvetov, Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska**

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, followed by Osip (Joseph), Elena, and Antony. Yegor and Maria were devoted to their children and, though of meager means, did all they could to provide them with the education which would help them in this life as well as in the life to come. Osip and Antony were eventually able to study at the Saint Petersburg Naval Academy in Russia, becoming a naval officer and a shipbuilder, respectively. Their sister, Elena, married a successful and respected clerk for the Russian-American Company. But Jacob yearned for a different kind of success, a success that the world might consider failure for "the righteous live forever, their reward is with the Lord" (Wis. Sol. 5:15).

And so, 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 was tonsured as a Subdeacon on October 1, 1825. He married a Russian woman (perhaps also a Creole) named Anna Simeonovna, and in 1826 graduated from the Seminary with certificates in history and theology. On October 31, 1826, he was ordained to the Holy Diaconate and assigned to serve the altar of the Holy Trinity-Saint Peter Church in Irkutsk. Two years later, on March 4, 1828, Archbishop Michael, who had earlier ordained Father John Veniaminov (Saint Innocent), elevated the godly deacon Jacob to the Holy Priesthood. This, however, was no ordinary ordination. As if he were a new Patrick, hearing the mystical call of his distant flock, Father Jacob yearned to return to his native Alaska. And the all-good God, who “satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness” (Ps.107:9) heard the prayer of his servant.

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 Saint 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.

Who can tell of the perils and trials associated with such a journey? Travel in those days was never easy, either overland or over the waves of the sea. 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, for when he was clothed in the garments of the Priesthood, he was found to be “clad with zeal as a cloak’ (Is. 59:17), and so he threw himself wholly into his sacred ministry. 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 Saint 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. For Father Jacob the services of the Church were life: life for his people and life for himself. It was in the worship of God that he found both strength and joy. Later he would transport this tent with him on his missionary journeys, and like Moses in the wilderness, the grace of God was found wherever this tent was taken (Num 4:1 ff; 10:17 ff).

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 Saint Petersburg, corresponding with Saint 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. Saint 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 Nabedrennik, Kamilavka, and Gold Cross. Later, he would be made Archpriest and receive the Order of Saint Anna.

These ecclesiastical awards do not tell of the personal sufferings of this warrior for Christ. 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. Who can utter the depth of sorrow felt by this God-pleaser? Yet he lifted up his voice with that ancient sufferer and cried, “shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity? In all this he did not sin with his

lips" (Job 2:10). In his journal Father Jacob attributed all to "the Will of Him whose Providence and Will are inscrutable and whose actions toward men are incomprehensible." He patiently endured hardships and sufferings like the Holy Apostle Paul. He saw in these misfortunes not a Victory by the hater of men's souls (i.e. the devil) but 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.

Instead, Bishop Innocent soon came to Atka and asked Father Jacob to accompany him on a voyage by ship to Kamchatka. Who can know the heavenly discourse enjoyed by these two lovers of Christ as they traveled over the waves? This, however, is clear, the holy archpastor was able to accomplish three things in Father Netsvetov. Firstly, he applied the healing salve of the Spirit with words of comfort; secondly, he dissuaded Father Jacob from entering the monastery; and thirdly, he revealed to the godly priest the true plan of the Savior for his life, that he 'might preach (Christ) among the Gentiles" (Gal. 1: 16) deep in the Alaskan interior. 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 Saint 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, who "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8), sought one last time to get the better of the righteous one. So the devil, the father of lies, (John 8:44), 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, that the light be not "hidden under a bushel" (Mt.5:15). In 1841, Father Jacob encountered a group of women from his flock in Amlia who had fallen victim to certain demonic influences and teachings. Blaming himself for the seduction and fall of his spiritual children by the evil one, he informed the leader among them that he was going to pay them a visit.

Upon arriving, he found one of the women paralyzed, semi-conscious and unable to speak. He ordered that she be removed to another house apart, and on the next day when this was accomplished, he lit the lampada before the icons of the beautiful corner, vested himself in his priestly epitrachilion (stole), sprinkled holy water throughout the room, and began the first prayers of exorcism. He then left.

During the night he was notified that the woman had begun to speak but incoherently. He came immediately to her and performed a second exorcism. This time, she sprang out of her bed and stood next to the saint, joined her prayer to his, and accompanied them with prostrations. When the prayers were finished, Father Jacob again sprinkled her with holy water and gave her the precious cross to kiss. She regained full consciousness, a state of health and true reason—that is, even the false teachings of the evil spirits had no more part in her.

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.

### **Epistle: Romans 15:1-7**

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

### **Epistle: Philippians 3:7-14**

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

### **Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35**

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

### **Gospel: Mark 10:29-31, 42-45**

So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first." But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

## **Service Schedule for the week of July 26 – services will be streamed live**

**Today** – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

**Saturday August 1** – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy and 5:00 PM Vespers

**Sunday August 2** – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy **MASKS REQUIRED**

## **Weekly Giving**

July 19 – 38 adults, 12 youth, \$1,456

## **Parish Announcements**

**Upcoming service schedule (Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM):**

Saturday July 25 – Masks required

Sunday July 26 – Masks not required

Saturday August 1 – Masks not required

Sunday August 2 – Masks required

Saturday August 8 – Masks required

Sunday August 9 – Masks not required

Saturday August 15 – Masks not required

Sunday August 16 – Masks required

Saturday August 22 – Masks required

Sunday August 23 – Masks not required

Saturday August 29 – Masks not required

Sunday August 30 – Masks required

Saturday September 5 – Masks required

Sunday September 6 – Masks not required

Saturday September 12 – Masks not required

Sunday September 13 – Masks required

*Blessing of Graves:* Blessing of the graves at the Parish Cemeteries will be held on Sunday, August 16 at noon. This was delayed from St. Thomas Sunday in April due to the Covid pandemic.

### *St. Vladimir Rummage Sale*

We are planning a Rummage Sale in the near future – it's been a while! Cleaning out your closet, garage, shed? Think of us! Saleable items are welcome to be dropped off in Daria Hall and put in the coat room or on the stage. Please see Melody Stavisky or Father Volodymyr.

*When venerating the icons, please only bow your head and refrain from kissing the icons in order to avoid the spreading of germs, which may transmit to a fellow parishioner and cause illness.*

### *Receiving of Holy Communion:*

Please keep your social distance while waiting to approach the Chalice.

Father will tilt the spoon into your mouth so there is no contact with your lips.

Do not wipe your mouth on the cloth.

Do not kiss the Chalice but you may bow your head.

The church has been set up for appropriate social distance seating. However, if you are feeling ill, please stay home. Also, those age 65 and over are still considered high risk and should make careful decisions about attending services. Father Volodymyr will continue to stream live Vespers and Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Thank you to everyone for their ongoing donations – please continue to send them to Father Volodymyr on a regular basis if you will not be attending services.

We pray for everyone's continued health and well-being.